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THE
WANDERING PATENTEE;
OR, A HISTORY OF
THE YORKSHIRE THEATRES,
FROM 1770 TO THE PRESENT TIME:

Interpersed with ANECDOTES respecting
MOST OF THE PERFORMERS
IN THE THREE KINGDOMS, FROM 1765 to 1795.

BY TATE WILKINSON. *R*

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

To which are added, never published,
THE DIVERSIONS OF THE MORNING, AND FOOTE'S TRIAL
FOR A LIBEL ON PETER PARAGRAPH.

Written by the late SAMUEL FOOTE, Esq.

Smith. SO YOU WRITE ON, MR. BAYES?
Bayes. AY—AND SO LONG AS I KNOW ALL MY THINGS
ARE GOOD, WHAT DO I CARE WHAT PEOPLE SAY.—AND
IT SHALL FIT, BOX, AND GALLERY IT, 'EGAD, WITH
ANY BOOK IN CHRISTENDOM."

Duke of Buckingham's Rehearsal.

VOL. I.

YORK:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

BY WILSON, SPENCE, AND MAWMAN:

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And by all the Booksellers in the city and county of York,

Anno 1795.

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EXTRAORDINARY DEDICATION.

THE AUTHOR, as WANDERING PATENTEE, requests permission to dedicate his books, NOT ONLY to the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Theatres Royal Drury-Lane, Covent-Garden, Bath, Norwich, Dublin, Edinburgh, &c. but to the more extensive range of every company now performing (as brothers and sisters of the Sock and Buskin) in GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, not omitting his most grateful remembrance and thanks, to his particular kind FRIENDS of every degree, and to the PUBLIC at LARGE, and is with truth their much honoured and highly obliged

humble fervant,

THEATRE-ROYAL, YORK, }
MARCH 21, 1795.

TATE WILKINSON.

N. B. The PATENTEE, of course wishes every happiness to his own Yorkshire company, on whose fidelity and talents (aided by our ardent endeavours for each other's prosperity) reciprocal interest is greatly dependent, and strongly

DEDICATION.

interwoven by our family compact, which, like marriage, makes our connection not easily destroyed, unless like modern disagreements, resembling a fashionable act of parliament, we with mutual consent agree to a divorce, and separately steer "North, south, east, west; far as the poles asunder." As Foigard says, "By my shoul, a "very pretty sheremony,"

ADDRESS
TO THE REVIEWERS;

PARTICULARLY TO THE AUTHORS OF
THE ANALYTICAL, THE ENGLISH, CRITICAL, AND
THE MONTHLY REVIEWS.

GENTLEMEN,

I FEEL it is too true, that humanely granting absolution for sin, too frequently creates inclination, and encouragement in a fluctuating mind to be languishing at sin again. But previous to my once more falling into natural error, I should stand manifoldly accused in broad-faced day of most glaring ingratitude, and every breach of good manners, did I not with the utmost sincerity thank you for your lenity, notice, and kindness in your well-pointed observations, by which I thought myself then much honoured, and did not feel very insignificant when I made the pleasant perusal; particularly when I reflected, how I might have been treated by your tickling rods of wit, justice, and severity, had you been so inclined to inflict. I rather at this moment feel fearful of your frowns and disapprobation, at my again uprearing my head:

but indeed, and indeed, gentlemen, only forgive me this once, and I never, no never will do so any more: and consider I have strong pleas, the being an *elderly gentleman*, and a *youthful author*. Here and there, however, I flatter myself I shall furnish some anecdotes that will be favoured with your reception. I hint *that* by way of a bribe, and make my escape like many great heroes when in real danger. And being well aware that I am here speaking to men of science, I will be sure to have some little sense by purloining from our favourite bard, with which I will conclude my petition, as thus,—*Good Sirs, do not use me according to my deserts; Oh, no! be more noble, and use me much better; for, as Hamlet says, “use every man according to his desert, and who shall scape whipping?” No, Sirs, “use me after your own honour and dignity.” The less I “deserve, the more merit is in your bounty.”*

I am, Gentlemen,

Your much obliged humble servant,

THEATRE-ROYAL, YORK, }

MARCH 21, 1795.

TATE WILKINSON.

PREFACE.

I AM of so little importance, either to the great or to the little world, that I must submissively beg permission to inform those readers who honour me with a perusal, that the work now before them is a kind of sequel to my Memoirs published in 1791, and has been put into practice for these last two years, and carried on in the same vague manner the former were.

During sixteen months out of the twenty-four, I have (from indispensable necessity) been absent from York, on my various round of annual circuit, which of course occasioned a delay of the work, by the receiving the proof-sheets from the printers, and then remitting them back; several errors in the arrangement have likewise crept in, which would not otherwise have happened had I been on the spot: Even a regular man of letters must have suffered from such inconvenient distances.

When at York, I had play-bills to assist my researches in this *important* work, but they were too voluminous to take from home with me; therefore when not having those aids by me at Leeds, Hull, &c. and no regular notes, rules, or mode whatever to assist me, (when exploring my brain) I was under the necessity of having recourse to memory; which will be easily perceived by my frequently bringing in an account of many tragic as well as comic transactions at the latter part of a theatrical campaign, which should have been placed at the first; nor needs there any ghost to point out those innumerable faults and errors.

I am apprehensive that several of my first drawn personages, inserted in the Memoirs, may be superior as to developement of character, but observe they were of a more dignified notice for an elderly critic than many here connected in the present undertaking; though in this last production, I think they are more various, and in my own incoherent and fantastical disposition, hope they will appear not less volatile and whimsical. Yet I must admit, that my eagerness and knowledge, as to their theatrical fame, appeared to me, as of more consequence for the reading critics of forty years ago: as a proof, I have never heard my *traits* of the great luminaries *Garrick*, *Foote*, and their opponents, *Whitfield* and *Wesley*, contradicted, but in general admitted; and I must re-

mark, that those portraits are a species and specimen of my former mimicry; for a writer of erudition may write an elegant description of mankind; but unless he possesses a trait of whim and humour, he never will create laughter; and *laughter* is worth its price:—For, as Garrick pointedly wrote—

“ I throw my gauntlet to the critic race :

(Throws down a glove.

“ Come forth, bold Grecians, meet me face to face !

“ Come forth, ye men of learning, at my call !

“ Learning ! *a little feeling's worth it all !*

“ And you of taste and fashion I defy !

(Throws down another glove.

“ But hold—you hate the Greek as much as I.”

In favour of my present new exhibition I can only say, that it is much better calculated for *modern readers*, either in Great Britain or Ireland, and more particularly so for the *Yorkshire* theatrical *amateurs*, whether old or young, than my *Memoirs* were; and I think, taken for all in all, must here and there occasion a chuckle of entertainment, though peradventure not command approbation. I must, however, in many places plead for forgiveness, where a punishment should perhaps, (or without any haps at all) with the strictest propriety, be inflicted. Before I conclude this harangue, I will by way of allusion, submissively insert a few lines from Mr. Foote's

Peter Paragraph as a kind of conclusive parody.—

The precise *Paragraph* says, "Last week I went
"to visit a Peer, for I *knows* Peers, and Peers
" *knows* me. Quoth his Lordship to me, Mr.
" Paragraph, with respect to your Journal, I wish
" that your paper was whiter, or your ink was
" blacker: Quoth I to the Peer, by way of reply,
" I hope you will own there is enough for the
" money. His Lordship was pleased to laugh, it
" was such a pretty repartee—He, he, he!"

What I mean to insinuate by the above quotation, is, to inform the English reader, that a large print of long-established fame, "The Dublin Journal," which afforded amazing profit to the proprietor, George Faulkener, from the emoluments arising from the numberless advertisements, yet to the purchaser the only expence was a *rap*, (in England termed a halfpenny). So I, like my friend *Peter*, am eager to gain favour by insinuating, that neither having chapters nor index, which my time and patience would not permit; I hope your honours will be pleased to allow, that (with all my ambiguity and aircastle prolixity) *there is ENOUGH for the money.*

I must here permissively stop the reader to inform him, that I had paid a compliment, as a DEDICATION,

without permission, to Mr. Wilson of York, as was, (and is) most justly due;—for to that gentleman's many acts of friendship, I stand more superiorly indebted, than to any other person; but Mr. Wil- son from motives of delicacy, begged to decline what I thought only the tribute of truth.—Our mutual friend, Mr. Suttell of York, must not here be forgot, but requested to accept a few words to assure him, I am truly sensible of the many fa- vours he has conferred on my family.

And now with all my sins upon my head, and wishing for a continuance of good spirits (at least) to feed and clothe me. I am,

The public's,

Faithful obedient servant,

TATE WILKINSON.

N. B. The author of the following Stage His- tory, must (as he did in his Memoirs) offer his due thanks to Mr. *Swalwell*, for his unremitting labour and attention in copying the manuscript for the press.

E R R A T A.

- Vol. I. page 103, line 7, read, health *will* permit.
 ——— — 169, — 5, read, In me Heav'ns minister!—
 In me my Father! (*Enthusiastic.*)
 ——— — 169, — 6, read, Thy father, idle railer!—
 What's thy meaning! (*Alarm'd.*)
 ——— — 169. — 12, read, hour *is* come.
 Vol. II. — 24, — 7, read, from Thursday the 15th.
 ——— — 25, — 19, read, summonsed on *Tuesday*.
 Vol. III. — 73, — 26, read, how *must* I grin.
 ——— — 93, — 11, read, Sunday the 17th of Nov.
 ——— — 196, last line, Prig of *Rank*.
 Vol. IV. — 93, line 11, a *revered* person.
 ——— — 122, — 12, but *you* did not.
 ——— — 155, — 19, want of knowledge.
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MEMOIRS.—The reader is requested to observe, that Signor *Giardini* is the name of the person who performed at York, as leader at the Rooms (and now living); *Guagdagni* was the name of the singer at Drury-Lane in 1755. *Geordani* was father of *Spilletta*, who performed at Covent-Garden Theatre 1754: *Geordani* is likewise the name of an eminent composer now in Dublin, and son to that *Giordani* mentioned.

THE
WANDERING PATENTEE.

NOTHING can come of nothing—If so, where there's nothing in, there's nothing can come out:—Therefore not devising means how possibly to take any root with the public opinion from my head of emptiness, I am puzzled how to obtrude this syllabub, frothy kind of a knowledge on the public, as to a beginning. For even when Mr. Brinsley Sheridan wrote a play, he might have found it difficult to please himself with a prologue for the ushering in his favourite child with the grace of effect to its guardians. If such a supposition be true, what then must I feel, who neither possess good wine nor good bush, and know not how to insinuate so far as to obtain good opinion to excuse my re-visit to the public, so soon after obtaining lenity, with gracious pardon and laughable reception of my Memoirs? It may be too probable, that that lenity I may have construed into praise; and this mistake may have led me into being bold, conceited,

Volume I.

B

confident, and daring ; which are not uncommon qualities, but generally accompany the ignorant and the unfeeling : for upstarts, to support their station, cancel at once all obligation. In truth, had I not burst thus easy and unexpected on the public, without any foundation for assuring myself welcome, my purpose (perhaps to my credit) had been blunted, and rendered entirely abortive, if delay had hung upon it like a frost to have nipped and blasted all my faculties: The which said faculties I perceive do decay, and indeed my precious eyes so much in this pursuit, that had I deferred it to any future period, I should never have been able to have proceeded in the attempt. But I dare assure the world and my friends, if they will forgive me this time, I never will do so any more, nor presume, as Mr. Busy Body, to be troublesome, and offer any book of mine to the public in future. I neither expect fame nor gain, and only beg permission to slide this publication, history, or stage journal, not as Memoirs, but in character as the WANDERING PATENTEE. I will introduce a variety of sketches, incidents, anecdotes, and little dramatic adventures, that will, I hope, not only amuse, but in point of chronology, be often satisfactory and useful to some present and future theatrical virtuoso, and particularly so to a Yorkshire stage visitant. I do declare solemnly,

that in my former undertaking, I had not any notes or copied directions; as the first sheets of that work were sent to the press from my own paw, and many passages in what I had sent to be transcribed I could not for the soul of me make out myself: But I have to this work a more regular assistant than memory, as to the material article of the dates; for my books and bills from 1766, I have in general to refer to; an advantage that my Memoirs had only here and there accidentally to rely on for information: a lucky point, which will make me steer more right in that respect, in spite of my own inevitable blundering, and will give me some title for my being honoured with a place in a theatrical study; and if not in a glass-case, must rest contented with a dusty shelf. I console myself, however awkward and difficult I feel at making a proper beginning, that it is strange, ay, passing strange, that from the first to the lowest class of gentlemen on the stage, however blessed many of them may have been and are, with talents and education, yet from the time of Betterton to the present day, I grieve to note, (Colley Cibber excepted) we cannot boast one actor as a sterling capital writer of plays, by any means equal to those written by gentlemen quite unaccustomed to the stage professionally: which should certainly

give great weight, and preponderate much in favour of the player as a proficient in stage exits and entrances: Yet Betterton's plays had better never have been printed; for his credit as an author does not entitle him to the closet, or a niche in our memories: For his "Amorous Widow," and his alterations of "Shakespeare's Macbeth," had better remain silent as his grave; for, if explored, they will not lead the modern reader into a belief that he deserved the appellation of Roscius. And it is remarkable, that Mr. Garrick, with his great knowledge of the art, (certainly beyond any other actor) yet made but a very middle-rate figure as an author.

I do not intentionally mean to depreciate the talents of that truly great little man; his prologues and epilogues were excellent, various, entertaining, and full of point; yet when those trifles may hereafter be resorted to for half an hour to kill time, his "Miss in her Teens," "Lying Valet," and "Lethe," will be sunk in his own River Styx; and as to sound reputation, they will be as little regarded on the stage, and as much forgotten as Mr. Foote's Orators, Taste, Knights, &c.

That Mr. Foote's pieces were neat traits, and of a peculiar excellence in the years 1740, 1750, to 1780, cannot be denied, and will, I dare say, be readily admitted by every lover of wit and

whim: But I mean that the dramatic works of those two luminaries of the English stage will be barely recollected, when Cibber's "Provok'd Husband," and Mr. Sheridan's "School for Scandal," will be alive to the end of the world; that is, provided common sense and printing exist to that awful moment, and that theatres are preserved and held in worthy estimation, so as to hold the mirror up to Nature. Indeed to retire back with Father Time, instead of advancing, and take a peep at Shakespear, the actors of his day, and even the present race of actors, might boast (without a fear of contradiction in their annals) that no less a genius than Shakespear was of their fraternity: But I really suspect he was not a good actor, for whatever debauched idle customs and manners of stage strut might have prevailed with obstinate performers, who heeded not his Hamlet's lesson then, any more than many wise-
acres do now, yet there exists an incontestible proof, that the performers of Shakespear's days were by no means destitute of stage knowledge and effect; which will be evident to the reader's observation by the remark, that Ophelia's songs were never honoured by the assistance of any eminent composer of that time or the present: The same tunes have all been imbibed and communicated traditionally from that to the present period, by

the simple means of one actress conveying to the other, from recollection only. And they are so happily conceived, that no supercilious attempt has been profanely offered to spoil what cannot be bettered. Nor do I conjecture that a Handel or a Haydn could have made them more elegantly simple or superior for the allotted purpose, than as they have stood unadulterated from their beginning to the present hour, notwithstanding the rapid improvement made by musical amateurs in this age of crotchets and quavers. Tho' Shakespear was not done strict justice to as an author in his own time, still it is apparent that he ever was considered as a wonderful poet, even by his enemies and contemporaries of his own days; for every actor knows the advantage of being the original, and pleasing on the first impression, to such a degree, if the part is a good one, as makes it difficult perhaps for a superior player to efface the effects of the original. And had he then known how to enforce the spectators on the first night of representation, as a Henry the VIII. an Othello, a Hamlet, a Falstaff, a Justice Shallow, or a Sir Andrew Ague-cheek, Nature would so have prevailed, and forced

——his soul so to his own conceit,

That from her workings, all his visage would have warm'd;

And guilty creatures sitting at a play,

Would, by the very cunning of his scene,
Been struck so to the soul, that presently
They would have proclaim'd their malefactions,
For murder, tho' it has no tongue,
Will speak with most miraculous organs.

I urge this for one forcible reason, (in my humble opinion) which is, that the grand umpire of critics, when Shakespear existed, must have conceived stronger notions of a Henry the VIII. and other historical characters of those times, than we can do now, when all connexion and kindred are lost and banished, with only a scrap of history for us to believe the legendary tales we are told at the fancy of the party-partial writer, whether in white or black characters, as suited his humour, interest, or caprice the best. Therefore I naturally conclude, had his stage efforts been of a moderate degree, his judges must, from conviction, have pronounced him an actor of ability; tho' perhaps not equal to their first-rate of those times. Consequently, these observations have naturally inclined me to conjecture, that allowing the immortal Shakespear as a lasting honour to his country, to the stage, and to the civilized world at large, yet Nature certainly had denied him as an actor, either pre-eminence or equality with his brethren who then acted his plays; because sterling merit, nature, and novelty of characters, must have established him in public opinion.

Perhaps (or without any perhaps at all) it is very lucky it was so: For could he have indulged himself with acting all the first parts, with his expanse of thought as an actor, and that he had only attained half of his unmatched comprehension as a writer, it might so have warped his judgment and better genius, that the unrivalled writings now conveyed to us from his admirable pen, had most probably been lost with his love of stage-dyings, swords, and daggers, and Shakespear never more been heard of. If so, we may truly conclude, that "all is for the best;" for, tho' the actor be dead, Shakespear's fire still burns with the utmost purity, and reigns triumphant in our hearts and minds, and will be piously transmitted to our children, and beyond doubt to latest posterity.

Now, if difficulties have prevented such eminent persons as I have been mentioning from attaining laurels; and that Betterton, Booth, Wilks, Barry, Woodward, Thomas Sheridan, John Kemble, and a long train of excellent and well-approved great actors, did not succeed in dramatic writing, how can I by any means, with propriety, make an offering fit for the amusement of the public; why I must stand excused, "as an old man will be talking," and cannot stick to my point, but if in conversation, must wander, and

Be waiting at the door with simp'ring grin,
When I should shew the company within.

However, as I boast not any ground to raise my reader's expectation, it will prevent disappointment, and make a bad meal go down better, than where a delicious one is expected and no food appears; and my informing the inspector, gentleman or lady, whichever of them is to travel over this bad soil, they will not I hope sink with disappointment, or be chagrined with a few ruts on the road. Therefore prepare, reader, for what many will term a frivolous piece of business that will not bear a defence; yet, that some charge may with great truth be alluded to, with just grounds, on matters of more importance, permit me to hint, how frequently the whole London world is agitated with strong curiosity and heated expectation, when a new play is announced by a celebrated genius (or Mr. Novice) as the author; the Green Room report is ascertained as full of approbation, admiration, and expectation; *it is cast with the full strength of the company; and what is not to be expected from the abilities of the writer, such actors, with the aid of painters, mercers, and the well-known liberality of the manager—what a treat! yet when the day of reckoning*

comes, it all ends in being frivolous, absurd, and insipid; the birth and the death occur perhaps on the same night, without the pain of a lingering departure. Indeed something too like what I have here mentioned has been often testified in the course of almost every theatrical season; as when the whole town was on tiptoe for Mrs. Jordan's New Comedy (as was the report); yet the first night it was *frivolous*—and alas! *poor Anna* dropped like an unfortunate young lady's pad. As to my frivolous self, I can only say to the reader as the murderer does to Macbeth, "I am a man."—The reader like Macbeth replies,

Ay, in the catalogue you go for man:

As hounds, and greyhounds, mongrels, spaniels, curs,
Sloughs, water-rugs, and demi-wolves are 'clep'd

All by the name of dogs: the valued file

Distinguishes the swift, the slow, the subtle,

The housekeeper, the hunter; every one

According to the gift which bounteous Nature

Hath in him clos'd; whereby he does receive

Particular addition from the bill

That writes them all alike:—and so of men.

Now whether to judge from the above, and make myself a puppy of *spirit*, or a *sulky stupid hound*, I cannot determine; but I will first try at a whimsical similitude of fancy for men in their different degrees of action, genius, and comprehension, by attempting a visionary comparison, which has just now struck my aircastle imagination.

BAROMETER

FOR THE WEATHER.

1. *Very dry.*
2. *Settled fair.*
3. *Fair.*
4. *Changeable.*
5. *Rain.*
6. *Much rain.*
7. *Stormy.*

BAROMETER

FOR MAN'S FACULTIES.

1. The highest pitch of human perfection and understanding.
2. Great strength of genius, with many shining qualities.
3. Lively, sensible, and entertaining.
4. Whimsical and weak, abounding with faults and foibles, full of errors, very impatient, with a mixture of truly good qualities.
5. A mind consisting of serious, heavy, melancholy thoughts, not making any allowances for the trespasses and faults of others, abounding with pride, spleen, and self-importance.
6. Full of thick coming fancies, gloomy, hysterical, and miserable, fond of other's ruin, full of envy, malice, and uncharitableness.
7. Overcome with passion, hatred, savage cruelty, phrensy, murder, madness, and self-destruction.

I have cursorily cast mine eye over the matter I have set here before me for choice, and puppy-like, forsake the catalogue of the dogs for the more fanciful visionary one; and determine on acting as a recruit under the applicable appellation of the fourth number that fills up the regiment of the name of changeable; for if I choose above it, I shall be drummed out as not fit for service. And tho' I may have chosen a commission without general approbation, yet I think the lists of the qualities allotted after No. 4, grow so much more worse and worse, that I dare not take the liberty to face my readers with nothing but dull and bad qualities; and as many persons gain attention from being well dressed, so I will put on my best accoutrements, and begin my conversation in as decent, ludicrous, tragical, comical, and farcical a manner as I am able in my real changeable character; and shall keep to the promise, which is, that I will be as various, prolix, and tiresome, now and then, as the wind or the weather.

Before my play-line begins I will mention, that a stage life, subsisting in a public line, (however exalted) must ever be liable to mortification and insult; of which those who are happily blessed with a private fortune have not the

least conception. A minister may be termed a great man, and his emoluments may be boundless and enviable, yet he must bear revilings, censures, and enmity, let him act as he will, right or wrong; 'tis the fate of his place, and to those irksome insults he must submit. But as the sun will sometimes peep at the minister in his palace, so will he graciously sometimes not only deign to peep, but occasionally grant days of sunshine on the poor manager of a theatre. And as this is a surprising fine day, and that I am in health and spirits, I beg the reader will attend to me like a tale from the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, or allow me the idea of the being honoured with the lady's or the gentleman's accompanying me through all my hair-breadth 'scapes and travels, with a full relation of many living and dead Princes and Princesses, and of every degree in the theatrical line, in the course of many years: And, if palatable, we will, reader, set out this very hour on our journey, as in an air balloon, a post-chaise, or caravan. I will not have our roads impeded with a load of quotations, but only pop them on our imaginations now and then, when they may be apt and pithy; as in hot weather, when rain cannot be attained, some friendly contributors, for the pleasure of the commonwealth, send a cooling water-cart to lay

the dust and refresh the wearied traveller and cheer his red hot, misty, tired eyes.

But come—(as Portia says)—I'll tell thee all my whole device

When I am in my coach, which stays for us
At the park gate; and therefore haste away,
For we must measure many miles to-day.

And now my patient (for so you had need be) and agreeable companion in a post-chaise (or whatever you like better)—smack! off we go!

I take the liberty to introduce a kind of stage-journal, as Wandering Patentee; which to most persons connected with the stage, or to actors on or retired from the stage, may prove worthy perusal, and even claim an hour's attention from admirers of theatrical entertainments; as the gliding appearance of heroes and heroines, kings and cobbler, queens, ladies of quality and no quality, chambermaids, and footmen, with the various *et ceteras*, will make such circumstances by many be read over with remembrance of pity, laughter, and regret. As a short bad prologue is borne with greater patience from the audience, than a long, tedious, indifferent one—

I will now attempt to present an idea of the York theatre to the present inhabitants of that city, as to what state it was in about the year 1766.—The following specimens will give a full view as

to the performers, and we can boast of superior entertainment at present.

The following lines were wrote by Mr. ROBERTSON in 1764, in a little piece entitled "The Fragment," which caused much disturbance in the minds of the players. The following lines were his trait of FRODSHAM, and tho' satirical, they are certainly whimsical, and worthy the perusal.

With arms and legs, outstretched like a *Pantine*,
Lo! Frodsham roars or whispers through the scene;
He rants, he splits the tasteless groundling's ears,
"And *Herod's* self, out-heroded appears."

Quaintly ridiculous his starts, his throes,
His attitudes, his sing-song ah's! and oh's!
Nor like a man pours he his plaintive strains,
But blubbers, school-boy like, his love-sick pains,
And for his bread and butter lost, complains. }
Observe his looks over one shoulder stray,
His arm extended points another way;
A mercer's rowl-stick, truncheon-like, he wields,
And IS the hair-brain'd monarch of Moor-fields;
His robe with air affected he infolds,
And like a bear his *dulcinea* holds;
He flaps her breath out with his rude embrace,
While all the time he slobbers in her face;
Above mankind in his own mind he soars,
Himself the idol he himself adores.
Of coarse-spun flattery proud, we oft may view,
Frodsham amid a low-liv'd servile crew;
Creatures who, spaniel-like, his footsteps tend,
And to *Sir Orack* with rev'rence bend;

'Mong whom enthron'd he wields his critic rod,
 While gaping fools admire their *wooden-god*;
 Hence on the stage, spite of mock grandeur's scene,
 A taste indelicate, and manners mean;
 Those who with lepers herd, are seldom clean.

An account of Mr. Frodsham and Mrs. Dancer
 I have given in my former annals, so will content
 myself with stating how the company was in the
 year 1766. Mrs. Dancer, late Mrs. Barry, now
 Mrs. Crawford left York in Sept. 1758.

M E N.

WILKINSON,	H. OWEN
<i>Manager for Mr. Baker</i>	J. OWEN
CRISP	FITZMAURICE
FRODSHAM	BUCK
LENG	ACHURCH
SWETNAM	FLOOR, <i>Prompter</i>
TENOE	PEARCE
ROBERTSON	CRESSWICK
ORAM	POWELL.

W O M E N.

CRISP	GRAINSBY
PHILIPS	FITZMAURICE
MAHON	TENOE
POWELL	QUIN.

I have recorded the means of my obtaining the chair, as distributor of justice, and the difficulties I had to encounter from the obstinacy of the performers, and the bad customs that had rooted and were difficult to weed away; also my entrance as actor in Sir Archy, for the County Hospital, and conditions; all which being so trivial, may likely be forgotten by the reader, but to those who have or have not honoured my Memoirs with a perusal, I here refer them for information to that momentous history.

Mr. CRISP was well made in person, and played most of the principal characters; was related I believe to the Keregan family by marriage, and by that step looked with wishing and expecting eyes to mount the throne; and of course no friend (as may easily be supposed), to my usurpation, but a mortal foe. He was very awkward in deportment, entirely possessed of the old strut and bounce, and was ever at the top of his voice. The following is Mr. Robertson's opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Crisp.

Lo! Nature's direst foe, King *Crisp* appears,
 And with discordance vile torments our ears;
 The signal cue when giv'n, the *machine* moves,
 It strikes the same whether it chides or loves;
 An octave higher always than the rest;
 Sweet harmony ne'er touch'd that callous breast,
 A wooden poor *Automaton* at best;

With toes turn'd in, thumbs cock'd, and bellman's cant,
It scolds, nay whispers always in a rant :
 Ended the speech, fix'd to the spot *it* stands,
 Till cue-struck, once again *it* lifts *its* hands :
 Deaf to the anguish of a wounded heart,
Automaton can but repeat *its* part :
 Ye gods ! that such a lump should e'er engage,
 To quit the plough, and vilify the stage ;
 Hence with th' unfeeling, bawling, stupid block,
 He's only fit to cry—*past twelve o'clock*.
 In one tone he can mouth, growl, rant, and roar,
 And make flat nonsense, what was sense before :
 His royal spouse, that wither'd, antique dame,
 Murders the youthful parts ; oh, shame ! shame ! shame !
 Patches and paint in vain their aid supply,
 The old crack'd wall, tho' varnish'd o'er, we spy ;
 To age, tho' rev'rence and respect is due,
 An old coquette we nauseate when we view :
 In vain she twines, writhes, jerks, the hag still glares,
 And thro' the flimsy veil old *Abigail* appears.

Mrs. CRISP, neat in dress to a degree, and a genteel made woman, but quavered her tragedy in imitation, as I was told, of Mrs. Porter ; who tho' we read much of as a good actress, and sometimes striking, yet had great peculiarities. So Mr. and Mrs. Crisp brought their oddities from London, where sometimes all is not right, though many of the performers there look with contempt from their theatrical palace on our little snug retreats.—Mr. Crisp had been long at

Goodman's Fields, and was related to Mr. Giffard, whose son is now living with great credit and retired to Southampton.

Mrs. Crisp, as Miss Tollet, acted for some years in under characters at Drury-lane, where seeing Mrs. Porter as the reigning queen of those boards, Miss framed herself on the faults of that actress: An error we on the stage are too often apt to fall into. They lived in great credit and were much esteemed by several worthy persons at York, Hull, and Newcastle. Mr. Crisp died after a severe and tedious illness at York, in Feb. 1768.—Mrs. Crisp departed this life, 1782.—She was a pattern for actresses as to neatness and propriety of behaviour.

She dressed the Nurse, in *Romeo and Juliet*, better than any person I can recollect—(not forgetting Mrs. Macklin, Mrs. James, and Mrs. Pitt;—the last has nursed many Juliets)—She was so habituated to sing her speaking with such a monotony, that she could not, if accident intervened, extricate herself with any advantage.—She was very attentive, and knew her author well, but to give an idea of her manner must be to mention my reviving the play of *King John*—Queen Elinor observes, “Son, list to France; join his conjunction:” But instead of speaking the line following, she unfortunately was imperfect, and

pronounced in the same swelling tone, in high blank verse—"Mr. Wilkinfon, go on, go on, go on! I cannot speak a word more."

Two more anecdotes I will present the reader with: When our tragedy queen, or Dame Crisp, (call her which you please) was personating her Majesty of Denmark, and entering in grief on the death of Ophelia, she exclaimed—"One woe doth tread upon another's heels so fast"—on the speaking of which, her enormous hoop and long velvet train (such were then used on the stage) caught fast by the wing, and when half on, half off the stage, she thundered out with all the grief of Denmark's Queen, "Stage-keeper, my hoop is fast! I am dis-tress-ed." As Grizzle says in Tom Thumb, "Her Majesty the Queen was in a passion."

The following I was favoured with from herself—"Oh! Mr. Wilkinfon, my grief has been great. When viewing my dear Sammy on his death-bed—"My dearest Henny, (then says he) "my relations have not behaved well to me; I "do not desire you to give them, or any friend "whatever, any part of what I leave in money "or effects." To which request (like Peter Paragraph, by way of reply) "Sammy, (says I) "do not distress yourself, I do not mean to give "them any thing; for on the contrary, my dear

“Sammy, I intend to keep it *all for myself*,” which last line she spoke most emphatically, and obeyed her promise with all the strictness and duty of true conjugal affection. I do not mean with any impropriety, for King Crisp did not die in affluence, but had ever lived with decency and credit.

In 1767, Mr. THOMAS POWELL (who was an inhabitant of York) was in the company; a young man possessed of great industry, good behaviour, and integrity, and was getting forward in public esteem, which I soon assisted by every means in my power. His person altogether was good, tho’ his voice not very pleasing either as a singer or speaker, (for he was both) and like Sir Archy’s observation in Squire Groom—“So Powell was at aw, frae the flea in the blanket to the elephant in the forest.”

In the year 1766 he had played with a Mr. Woodcock’s company at Wolverhampton, where he married Miss Dolly Steward, first cousin to Miss Elizabeth Wrottesley, (daughter of the Rev. Sir Richard Wrottesley, and niece to the Dukes of Bedford, and the Marquis of Stafford) who in the year 1769, was married to his Grace the Duke of Grafton. The player fascinated the eyes of the young lady of fashion, and she eloped with the happy Powell. The mother was not of the most amiable disposition, or very

strongly attached to parental affection, therefore it will not be a matter of surprise that she discarded her daughter, and "Let her down the wind to prey on fortune." The only alternative and resource the fond pair had, was the stage; which perhaps, secretly, was a strong motive for her elopement. She and her true-lover came to York and solicited an engagement; Mr. Baker gave him 13s. 6d. per week. However little that sum may now seem, Mr. Robertson (whose veracity I cannot doubt) assures me, when he played at Stratford-upon-Avon, 50 years ago, he was well boarded and lodged for 4s. per week.

Powell was found of great utility: Madam made her debut at York in the character of Hermione; a task far beyond her abilities, tho' she had been trained with a liberal education, and her person was good, tall and remarkably well-made; but in the course of a little experience, high flown tragedy was not her forte. Fanny in the Maid of the Mill, Lady Rusport, Lady Alton, and parts of that cast she promised to arrive at excellence in, for any stage. Where natural hearty laughter was necessary for the character, she was in that point almost equal to the late and never to be forgotten Mrs. Clive: In the part of Nell, particularly where she tells Jobson, she is to keep a coach—which character, though excellently

performed in the present day, yet Mrs. Clive in that passage is not by any means surpassed or equalled. But the lady I am treating of, from what cause I cannot guess, but am certain it was not for want of an affectionate husband, for he was blindly attached to her, and could not, or would not, from false tenderness, observe or thwart her foibles: but sorry am I to mention how the said Mrs. Powell in the prime of life, indulged with sleep, and

Her vapours to still,
First granted her will;
And the quieting draught was a dram, poor man!
And the quieting draught was a dram.

Which practice affected her brain to such a degree, that she was obliged to be under some little confinement at Bramham: She, however, (notwithstanding every care) fell into that kind of stupor and lack of her former sensibility, that her friends and the public rather wished for, than regretted her departure from this life, which happened at Hull in the month of November 1773. Even her loving mate, my friend Thomas Powell, bore the stroke like a philosopher, and submitted with true Christian patience, declaring with all amiable love to his friends, that his dear Dolly never in his opinion looked better than *after she was dead.*

In order to give a more particular account of Mr. Powell, I will here acquaint the reader, that he continued with me a most faithful friend and servant, so long as Saturday May 20, 1775, when he left me on being allured with the idea of getting into managerial power (smelling to one nosegay, like the two Kings of Brentford) with Mr. Whiteley, a genius possessed of power and fame on the theatrical turf. But the connexion did not last long: Whiteley would not give up any part of his monarchy, for which Powell thirsted as eagerly, as Dives did for a drop of water from Lazarus to cool his tongue: So on an offer from an invader on part of Whiteley's dominions, in no less a town than Manchester, Powell, like Dumourier, revolted and joined the royal standard, where an act of parliament had graced the brows of Mattocks and Younger, who concluded, that with two such towns as Liverpool and Manchester, secured by patents, their fortunes would be rapidly made. The said Thomas took a nephew with him, William Powell, and had him taught music, in which he made such proficiency as soon to obtain a vacant seat in the Manchester Orchestre: He proved so good a young man, so assiduous, well-behaved, and trusty, that Younger appointed him a higher situation as prompter, &c.; and when Younger was engaged

some years since in London, as inspector, he got him fixed at Drury-lane theatre, where he has behaved so well as to be honoured with the confidence of Mr. Sheridan, Mr. King, and Mr. Kemble, and treated with respect by them all.

If I wanted to purloin a single line, I must trust to my own ingenuity, or ask the aid of spies on their government; for young Powell is tenacious almost to a fault, and is as watchful as a lynx over his employer's property. He has married the handsome Mrs. Farmer, now known to the public in London as Mrs. Powell; a very promising actress. When last I saw young William, he seemed in an alarming state of health, but I hope my fears were groundless, as he helps to aid and comfort his parents, who live with him. But I must not forget, on account of the nephew, to return to my friend Thomas Powell, whom I just now left with Mr. Younger at Manchester. He was so indefatigable, so ardent in his attention to Younger's welfare, as only could be equalled by an immoderate rage for acting; he was more eager to make his audience happy than they sometimes wished. Younger was equally stage-bitten; even at London, be it remembered (previous to his last situation there) he never neglected, while at Covent-Garden, on his annual benefit night, to treat his friends with a full sight of his corpulent person; which in his proper capacity was con-

cealed there as the prompter; and when he produced himself on the boards to make himself happy, it generally was in something of no less consequence than Zanga, Groonoko, &c. and he wondered, and never could find the reason why the theatre on such nights was not well attended. But when manager at Manchester, if he could not fill the theatre by his performances, yet he could make himself a perfect happy man, with a good dinner, a good supper, and a pocket full of fruit, almonds, raisins, &c.—He ever was munching and toiling incessantly as to food, and in that point was most attentive and arduous in the extreme, much more so than to Mammon, who was to be the necessary procurer. The luxurious fatigues of the palate he would labour off in the evening, with representing to his friends and the public, Richard, Lear, or Bajazet, supported by his trusty officer, his friend in war and his friend in love—for Powell acted Jaffier to his Pierre, Orestes to his Pyrrhus, Tamerlane to his Bajazet, &c. They both having plenty of blank verse characters, sufficient not only to satisfy but almost satiate a moderate love of playing, and the one not cutting down the other by the bursts of thundering applause, or creating jealousy in the breasts of either by a partiality from their auditors, as bestowing the wreath of triumph on the brow of either Younger or Powell

as to preference. The true honesty, worth, and good principles, which as men they both possessed, occasioned as honourable and permanent a friendship as perhaps ever existed.—Younger was remarkable for being firm in his attachment to any gentleman, lady, or dependent, or any person whatever, whom he wished well, or that he judged worthy his support; and he has, I believe, often hurt himself to serve others. He was so anxious for the welfare of Powell, that the following admirable lines occurred at that time to my imagination:

Know too, by *Nature's undiminish'd law*
 Of deep creation, atoms, systems, all
 Attract and are attracted; nor prevails the law
 Alone in matter; *soul alike with soul*
 Aspires to join, nor yet in souls alone,
 In each idea it imbibes, is found
 The kind propensity: And when they meet
 And grow familiar, *various* tho' their tribe,
 Their *tempers various*, vow perpetual faith,
 That should the world's disjointed frame once more
 To Chaos yield the sway, amid the wreck
 Their union should survive, with Roman warmth,
 By sacred hospitable laws endear'd,
 Should each idea recollect its friend—
 Here then we fix, on this perennial base
 Erect thy safety, and defy the storm.

It seems unavoidable in giving a sketch of my York hero, to steer quite clear from my late good

friend Mr. Younger. Those honest characters went hand in hand, and were truly the Orestes and Pylades of the Manchester theatre: But time that dissolves all, and time that occasions friendships, coolness, forgetfulness, and even sometimes enmities and likings we know not why, so it came to pass, that Younger, not thinking his acting sufficiently applauded in Lancashire, wisely accepted the offer of prompter at Drury-lane theatre, leaving the country critics to live in ignorance, like ingrates. His faithful Powell proved himself worthy the attraction of the lovely fair-ones, by having set the bosom a-burning of a Manchester young lady, whose maiden name I cannot just now recollect; she confessed her passion, and was graciously rewarded by his accepting her hand, and leading her to the altar. Besides the article of love, she presented our lucky Powell with a handsome fortune;—he seemed now seated on a pinnacle of greatness; he felt himself a great actor on the stage, and a beloved rich man off;—he trod on air; and finding his stage appetite not worn out in any degree, like his friend Melanthus Younger, fired with ambition he was resolved to gratify it to the fullest extent, by turning manager, purchasing clothes, and forming a circuit of country towns; some of which he took as general by means of rhetoric, others he assailed by storm, and drove

the petty stage monarchs and their tattered soldiers before him. Thus far he flew before the wind; he judged money would beget money, but this stock, where he exhausted his stores, so far from yielding *cent. per cent.* proved a South-Sea bubble. The sunshine fled, and sudden storm, tempest, and famine, with floods of distress poured in from every quarter: He was quickly overwhelmed with misfortunes—Poverty, that grim disagreeable visitant, was his constant companion, her gripe was fast, she would not quit her hold, but conveyed our Emperor Alexander from jail to jail. In jail, though he could not boast of his apartments, he might boast of full scope for his imagination; not only his great friends had long looked cold, but he was also neglected by the small ones, who had basked in his sunshine: He might aptly repeat the following thought:

How like a prison is to a grave! When dead, we are
With solemn pomp brought thither, and our heirs—
(Masking their joy in false dissembled tears)
Weep o'er the hearse; but earth no sooner covers
The earth brought thither, but they turn away
With INWARD SMILES, *the dead no more remember'd*:
Even so when enter'd in a prison.

One season when his liberty at length was by some lucky circumstance obtained, he was glad to be received by Mr. Yates for three summer months at Birmingham, where he was perforce

contented to go on for messages, or any menial business the stage required; of course he neglected his person, but with all his misfortunes he never sunk into despair or suffered himself to be guilty of a mean, unworthy, or dishonest action. Ill fate generally pursues the unfortunate, as one lucky stroke usually leads to another, and often occasions small matters to rise to greatness: So woe begetting woe, is shocking even to reflect on. What must such reflection make the tortured mind feel, when nearly plunged in supposed helpless misery? Such was his lot for some years.

Here however, the reader will be suddenly surprised with a wheel of unexpected good fortune; an instance that misfortune at length grew weary of her cruel inflictions on the worthy: For as Powell, when reduced to the utmost extremities for common support, (and after experiencing more real calamities than, as a Barbarossa, he had suffered or inflicted with imaginary cruelties,) was walking with his wife at noon in the outskirts of a village near Swansea, in Wales, to make a dinner on air—not exercising to procure a stomach,—at such a moment, with his mind and heart fraught with distress, the post-office boy, who that noon, in the month of May, 1789, was hasting to deliver his letters in that district, turned round and asked if his name was Powell? Being answered in the

affirmative, he presented a letter, requesting one shilling for the postage; the wife fumbled her pockets in vain, the poor actor fumbled also, but with no more success than his lady, not a sixpence or even a penny was to be found in any ragged or disconsolate corner; the lad insisted on the letter or pay, for fear of his master. Powell would not restore it, but full of shame, vexation, and distress, tore open the letter in the utmost confusion; the wind caught a slight piece of paper, and waisted it from the letter over their heads, which Powell pursued as a child does a butterfly; as soon as the pleasing gale had waisted the precious treasure to a neighbouring hedge, Powell caught it eagerly, and held it fast; when lo, to their wondering eyes, it was a bank note for 30l. Recovered from such agreeable sensations, as the reader will admit must be *imagined, not attempted* to be described, Powell and wife, with fluttering and grateful hearts, explored the letter, to know to whom they were indebted for this treasure, which in their then state of penury was equal to a Twenty Thousand Pound Prize to those who are not necessitous. When to their astonishment, and almost beyond the bearing, the charming lines informed them, the bank-bill was to bring them to Manchester immediately, to take possession of a fortune, not less than ELEVEN THOUSAND POUNDS! left by a relation of

Mrs. Powell's, who dying suddenly without having made his will, she became the undisputed heir. Not the coronation of a king, not the vanity of an actor, loaded with applause, or a glorious conquest to a general, could ever have given more happy sensation to the human breast, than this sudden change of fortune, as the transition was immediate from the deepest distress, surrounded by calamity, to that of wealth, attended by health and happiness. He might sing with propriety a hymn to his god, and after that might chaunt in character,

“ Never let the noble mind despair.”

The reader need not be told, that they did not lose time as to taking such a pleasant, unexpected journey, nor the securing the money, &c. the late possessor had taken much pains to accumulate; which good business being finished, to their great satisfaction, they retired from the bustle of Manchester and the great world, to the chimney-corner of life, and took a neat, small, and commodious dwelling, beautified by a little garden and a dimpling brook, in or near the delightful town of Worcester: There the reader may now find them enjoying every comfort in a much more superior degree than if they had not known calamity. To such happiness as this many of the great and affluent are strangers, either in the

circle of courts or at their country palaces. I cannot say but I envy honest Powell, and hope he will allow me to wish for such a situation, though I cannot expect ever to attain it; yet I assure him I have no desire to lessen his happiness, but truly rejoice as his friend, that an honest man is, after all his toils, so worthily by the hand of Providence rewarded. So at Worcester at present I leave him, with all that health and contentment I have here mentioned, which I hope he will long enjoy; and when we do meet, we will tell old tales, and laugh at gilded butterflies, and will remember, with advantage, what feats we have done at Hull, at York, and Manchester.

Next to my friend Thomas Powell, remains Mr. CRESWICK of the York troop of 1767; a simpering, ogling, inoffensive character; a great admirer of *himself*. We did not long agree, he left me as a discarded actor in 1773, and from that period, by dint of industry, without talents, he, to my astonishment, got an existence by his assiduity and perseverance in giving stupid lectures to the entertainment of no one but himself, and that said person was gratified in the highest degree; and what was strange, he got pupils to learn a mode of pronunciation for the English language! It is true he did not.

want a tolerable education, but was a bad speaker. He would read *wold* for *world*; for *superfluous*, *supufluous*, &c. His first appearance in public was at Mr. Holland's benefit, in 1758—the Beau in the Toy-Shop—after that, previous to my meeting him at Edinburgh, and engaging him for the York theatre, he acted Beau Mordecai and some trifling characters at Covent-Garden, but not any with estimation, either in town or country; he had also a very bad memory, and to make that worse, was always frightened out of his small wits.

Learning and genius now are trivial things,
 'Tis bronze alone makes heroes, wits, and kings;
 Bronze we call genius, spirit, life, and ease,
 And ignorance, well bronz'd, is sure to please:
 Nor need the actor mourn his brain of lead,
 If bronze, almighty bronze, his influence shed:
 'Tis bronze alone true taste and worth affords,
 Makes butchers beaux commence, and tailors lords;
 Makes well-bred carpenters in buskins tread,
 "And tonsors govern mighty realms for bread,"
 On *Dulness*' form, begot by *Impudence*,
 Of both his parents the true quintessence,
 Creswick approaches; but alas, so dull,
 So empty, though of *self* so very full;
 So *flatly pert*, he tires our patience quite,
 We yawn, and wish the *creature* out of sight;
 Of vile Monotonists the very worst,
 On *Lethe's* bank with foggy opiates nurs'd:

The boxes ogling with a saucy lear,
 He seems to say, with self-applauding sneer,
 "Ladies, your most—What think ye? Did ye ever
 "See any thing so handsome, smart, or clever?"
 And yet in archness should some female own
 "She loves," he stops, retreats, and pug is gone.
 The reputation's all, give that, and then—
Daffadil leaves the *something else* to men.
 Others may raise our laughter or disdain,
 But Creswick's nauseous impudence gives pain.

He died suddenly, when teaching some pupils to read, early last winter, 1792, regretted as an honest man, by the few that were acquainted with him. What they gleaned as to knowledge they are the best judges of, as they must know how far his lectures tended towards their improvement—"You a-e-a ve-y impe-tinent man". This expression was not guttural, but he was utterly deprived of pronouncing the letter *r*. "I p-onounce the *wo-d* thus."

In the list of that year Mr. ORAM was an actor in esteem with the public; an unhappy tempered man, either on or off the stage; a self-tormentor. He died in the winter 1791.

Next marches Oram, with slow labour'd pace,
 Right reverend air, and consequential face;
 His every look, word, motion, all declare
 Those looks, words, motions, all pre-studied were:

Like Syſiphus, he rolls the pond'rous ſtone,
 Like Syſiphus, he ſtill may roll it on;
 He toils, he moils, he labours up the hill,
 Strive as you pleaſe, poor man ! 'Tis labour, labour ſtill.
 Nor *roſtrum* whence to ſermonize mankind,
 Nor barn to thrash in was the ſtage deſign'd !

Mr. LENG, who is now living, and deſervedly called *Good Old Leng*, came to the York company in the year 1756. His conduct through life has been ſuch as to merit the good wiſhes of the public. He was ſo fortunately unfortunate as to gain a fourth ſhare of a Twenty Thouſand Pound Prize in the Lottery of 1776-7; but when he came to claim his golden prize, the holder of the ticket made off, and left poor Leng to breakfast with what appetite he pleaſed. However he bore his diſappointment as well as could be expected; and philoſophy it certainly required, when ſinking into the vale of years, with a proſpect of being independent for life, to have ſuch a bleſſing ſnatched from him when judged moſt ſecure, and which every reader muſt naturally feel and commiſerate. When he firſt came into the York company, he was termed Beau Leng, for though Frodſham was brilliant as to promiſe of abilities, and gained the ladies' hearts on the ſtage, yet off the boards Beau Leng was the man for the ladies; for Frodſham was ſlovenly and even dirty to a degree, the other came glaring in the

noon-day fun, with a fierce gold laced hat, a flaming laced scarlet waistcoat, &c. and to this day he is ever clean, regular, and creditable to himself and his profession. If he is not wanted till the farce, he is so attentive to the little he has to do, that he would be unhappy if not properly accoutred in character one hour at least before the first music is called. Though he cannot boast of superior abilities as an actor, yet he may boast of what does not always accompany brilliant talents, that is of a clear upright conscience, and has no need to rub his hands, or have his sleep disturbed with crying—"Out, damned spot! Out, out, I say!"

His wife was in the York company in 1766, the year I began my York regency, as quoted in my history of histories: She is of Irish growth; was then called Miss Grainsby; did not seem to promise much, but she ever declared she never liked ducks, till they grew to be geese, or to go in a ferry-boat, unless the water was low, for if it were higher than it was yesterday, it would certainly flow into the boat and overset it: However since Mr. Leng has manufactured her, she has proved a very useful subject to my rural dominions; and whenever she is ill, I am anxious for her health, as in old ladies she is the very Mrs. Webb of my Yorkshire theatres, and plays several characters in that cast with much approbation.

The said lady's mate, Billy Leng, captivated bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, by the charms of a *lily white hand*; at which she still continues to gaze with a virtuous and amiable adoration; and when he lifts that hand to support the friendly tobacco pipe, she views and reviews his quintessence of dust with eyes of infinite self-satisfaction, and to his shrunk remains she gives every help and attention, crying, "*Um, um!* all my own—for "*richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, and "for better and for worse!*"

Mrs. FITZMAURICE, whose name the reader perceives in the list, had merit in her profession; she left my care for Bath, where Mr. Keasberry was very kind to her, and gave her a provision in that theatre when rendered incapable of service. She died in that city several years since: her maiden name was Hippisley, daughter of old Hippisley, the famous comedian, and consequently was sister to the late celebrated Mrs. Green, who died at Bristol Hot-Wells in the winter 1791, after having retired some years from the Theatre-Royal Covent-Garden, where she was held in universal and deserved estimation.

Mr. ROBERTSON I have mentioned with the respect he truly deserves in my Memoirs; more note is therefore needless, and would offend him as a ridiculous repetition, and the reader would term me a tedious old fool.

The reader will observe that Mr. Robertson wrote that little sketch entitled "The Fragment," in the character of POCOCURANTE: The following was his own picture.

See Robertson's poor Merry-Andrew mien,
The footman's Zany—mar the comic scene;
He squints, distorts, and aims the scurvy jest;
An actor he!—A mere buffoon at best.

Miss PHILIPS (the heroine) I also mentioned in my Memoirs, likewise Mrs. MAHON, (now Mrs. Palmer) and her present happy elevated station. A Mr. BUCK is the only one on the list I shall intrude on the reader for that year: He was an useful actor, and deserves mention as a worthy member of society. He is now living independent in London: And as the London performers (who roll in carriages, and stop the road to the stage door, on each noon and evening) when incomes are compared, must look down with pity on the wretched pittance of York actors, yet will they wonder and doubt the truth of the following assertion; that from small incomes, with attention and oeconomy, Mr. Robertson is *now* living with credit on his theatrical savings, and has supported himself with comfort from the interest his hard labours in the theatrical field have earned him. Mr. Buck, now in London, can boast the same. In 1791

Mr. Oram was a third instance ; and within these few years Mrs. Crisp a fourth. All at the same time enjoying independence in their old age—Hear this, ye great ones, and hear it, Tate Wilkinson, who knows, like many others of his brethren, how much easier it is to give than take advice.

I shall not mention the merits or the demerits of the TENOES, OWENS, SWETNAMS, &c. ; as I discharged them all, I could only treat on their insignificance as performers, and intrude too much on the time of my reader, to whom it is very immaterial whether they were ever known, or are remembered or forgotten ; however, as death levels all distinction, they are in possession of as much earth to cover them, as others who have gone before, or myself and others of superior circumstances can command at the last exit from life to death.

When we shall close our eyes and shut out daylight,
Nor longer view the ways of man.

In the season 1767 I engaged Mr. ROBSON, whom I played with at Edinburgh : He was a native of Hull, bred a peruke-maker there, but cast away the curling-irons and combs, to commence actor. He had a good person, an excellent memory, and would have been better but for his provincial dialect. He was of great ser-

vice as a singer as well as performer. His first appearance with me, was on the first of October, 1769, at the Hull Old Theatre, in Lowgate, in the character of Lothario. He did not continue with me more than two years, but went to seek his fortune: He was retained a few years since by Mr. Harris at Covent Garden; I remember him there in January 1778. He will be better known to the reader when I mention that he was so lucky as to be manager and joint patentee of the Theatre at Margate; which I am informed is in general well attended by every class of persons who visit that place of general resort. I never had the pleasure in all my rambles of visiting Margate, so cannot attempt to amuse the reader with the least account of the manners, laws, and customs, of that *Spa*. I am informed that Mr. Robson, weary of the cares of monarchy, has sold his share of the property to Mr. Hull, who commenced manager there last summer, 1792; I hope with every success, as my esteem and wishes are ever fervent for his and Mrs. Hull's welfare.

A Mr. SHAFTOE ROBERTSON I engaged also in the year 1767, he had a good education, and to that annexed a good understanding, but did not possess Lord Chesterfield's graces; quite the reverse, for he walked like a crab. He left me; got to be manager of the Lincoln company,

and soon obtained the honour of being commander of the New Theatre at Sheffield. But that man of war needed a more experienced admiral: Instead of making it marred his fortune; his high blown pride broke under him, and left him to the mercy of the rude waves, that did for ever hide him. He bid adieu to the vain pomp and glories of this life, and his remains were interred, with great respect, by a large and respectable body of free masons at Sheffield: He was a brother of their lodge, and they paid the funeral honours, besides assisting, as I am told, the distressed widow and friendless orphans that he left behind him with his blessing only, which was all that he good man could bestow with his last sigh.—Mercy Heaven!

It was necessary to mention this gentleman, as it will be found hereafter that the said Mr. Robertson was in some measure the occasion of my trying my theatrical fortune at Sheffield; of which a full and true account shall be given.

I do not find any particular occurrences that jog my battered memory till 1768, except giving many curtailed pieces, such as the Fabulist from Sir John Vanbrugh's *Æsop*. Indeed, were I to boast of the many pieces I have cut and mangled I could vaunt of as many murders as any Democrat dare proclaim. In the Summer's Tale the songs were highly approved as a second piece; this re-

lation will be confirmed by all who remember the merits of Mrs. Mahon, who sustained not only the first character in that piece, but all the leading parts in the operas; she was also, what very seldom occurs, as good an actress as a singer, and played several characters with great propriety, archness, and pleasantry: A very material point, and what is generally found greatly deficient even in the London theatres (I mean when Mrs. Crouch is not employed) in our Clarissas, Pollys, Maid of the Mill, &c. from the time of the plain-featured Miss Brent to the present with the syren Billington; who, though she may boast of beauty which we all admire, acknowledge, and bow to, I dare swear she does not, in her own opinion step forth equal as the actresses in the singing parts she performs with the neat simplicity of the elegant Crouch. Mrs. Mahon left York that autumn for the Bath theatre.

August 12, 1768, Mrs. BAKER, of whom I have spoken much (and with justice in my Memoirs) quitted Scotland, and made her first *entrée* in the Widow Harley, for my benefit at Newcastle; from that place we proceeded to York races. The reader will probably recollect this lady, particularly from her letters (more than my mention) printed at the end of my fourth volume. The authors of the Review approved them so much, that they

wished for more; and indeed they are universally allowed to be replete with whim, pleasantry, and good sense. I shall probably beg permission to introduce a few more, in the course of this jumble, from the same hand.

Mrs. Baker's appearance caused much feud with endless animosities, jars, and discontents in my little community. Miss Philips took it to heart, head, and hand, and left me the spring following, to head another squadron of foot.

On Mrs. Baker's acting Lady Townly, in 1768, the Dowager Queen Crisp advanced to her with slow and dignified step, truly tragic, and in pompous tone said, "*Woman!* how dare you insolently play my part of Lady Townly? I have acted it here these 40 years." To which interrogation Madam Baker exultingly replied, mimicking and full of contempt, "*Woman!* if it be true that you have acted Lady Townly these 40 years, it is high time you spoil the part no longer, *woman!*" On which Queen Crisp departed in silent rage, and the laughter of the other served for a tragedy kettle-drum and trumpet to honour her noble queen's steps full out of hearing.

Mrs. Baker's superiority and genius also galled and made my dame Powell wince: In short, wives and husbands, husbands and wives, were all in arms and uproar; all full of treason,

Secret plots, and machinations against me their sovereign, but not at that time a lawful one, being only governor of the *vagrants*, no royalty having at that time graced our tin coronets, &c. For be it known to all men, that frequently when an actor's wife or the lady's husband is sick, their friends are instantly informed, whether dropsy, consumption, or miscarriage, it is all owing to the unprecedented barbarity of the manager. I do not relate this as peculiar to myself, but to managers in general: No doubt but some of us are sad dogs, (myself not excepted) very sad dogs indeed! If these things are so, it can be no wonder that the poor managers are so often, nay so perpetually the theme of abuse—rare instances to the contrary.

From this account strangers to a theatre must naturally conclude actors wives, and actresses husbands are the most loving couples in the world: but I fear in that point the idea will break, as the thread binding is so very weak:—What then can occasion the feelings, on even a supposed slight, to rouse such implacable resentment? Why, that which guides the world in general, and is predominant, more or less, in every human breast—INTEREST, ENVY, and SELF-OPINION. The husband, perhaps, is as fashionable, in regard to this pure attachment, as any person in a higher rank; and the lady, it is pos-

sible, sometimes may have as little anxiety about her own turtle-dove—but let any just or necessary decree deprive either of a part, up starts a *real fury*—without the assistance of a carpenter or trap door—for touch false pride, and not only imaginary greatness, but indeed interest is concerned, and that being in some degree mutual for the services of pleasure, as well as profit and necessities, in consequence they become the most tender and affectionate couples that ever yet claimed the Flitch of Bacon. On such imaginary charges I dare say I have been arraigned for as many deaths, cruelties, &c. as would take up a whole week's employment for the proper officers to bring out the number of various indictments.

On the death of poor Frodsham, early in October 1768, (though all thinking people were astonished that he had existed so long) it was mentioned, that Wilkinson's ill usage, as manager, had killed him: The first week after his death, it was only hinted—the second, it was publicly mentioned—and the third, not only was universally believed, but publicly attested. Though the allegation lasted longer than a *nim* days' wonder; yet, like the unhappy man, that scandal at last died a natural death.

HULL, Nov. 4, 1768.

“As I find it has been reported that Mr. Wilkinson refused to fix my benefit for Tuesday last, till he was forced to do so by the intercession of my friends, and that the produce of it has not been applied in a proper proportion to my use, I think it incumbent on me, not only from motives of obligation, but from those of common honesty, to assure the public, that such report is *utterly without foundation*, the reverse being truly the case; for on its being hinted to Mr. Wilkinson, that an early day might be of service to me, he immediately appointed it, and I have received *all I have a right to*, and as much as if Mr. Frodsham had been living we were entitled to betwixt us. If this voluntary acknowledgment does not clear Mr. Wilkinson from imputations he so little deserves, I am ready to give the strongest assurances of their falsehood which can be required of me, and I remain with the highest respect and gratitude, the public's

“most obliged,

“and obedient humble servant,

“ISABELLA FRODSHAM.”

The said season 1768, a new elegant Theatre was opened at Hull: We jogged on quietly on a safe and pleasant easy trot there and at York,

till April 1770—Not any thing material as to performers, more than a decent regular set; no blazing comets: The company was in general well rewarded, and, what was more extraordinary, the audiences were satisfied, though the troop was but la, la, and the wardrobe and scenery very indifferent, compared to the modern fashion of either; but the remains of Mr. Baker's scenery bore strong marks of the artist's hand, they had been done by that gentleman in his younger days, who, when sinking into years, was grown feeble, gouty, and lazy; but whoever sees or has seen the prints of York and Lincoln Minister, will instantly perceive great genius and masterly finishing.

Mrs. Baker, who I introduced that year, was certainly an excellent actress, and proved a great acquisition to the Hull season, till January 1769. She remained the York and part of the Newcastle season the summer following, then returned to Edinburgh, whence she came.

In October 1768, I must give information of much importance, for in that year I entered into the marriage state with Miss JANE DOUGHTY, when Holy Church united two in one.

That winter a Miss GARVEY came to supply the irreparable loss of Mrs. Mahon. She married a young gentleman whose name was Ra-

worth, recommended to me by my good friend Mr. Moody: He and his warbler left me for Mr. Austin's company at West-Chester. When Raworth came first, he was a handsome young man, made more than common promise as a singer, was rather corpulent, but to my great surprise fell into a consumption, and soon after his leaving York died at Chester. His lady came to take her leave, and begged permission to assure me—that she neither liked me as a manager or a man; for she knew that being a manager I must be a rascal: However she parted from me, she averred, without enmity; but there was one thing which she could never forgive. I asked her what dreadful offence I had been guilty of, and whether I could not make her some atonement? She tartly replied—"Atonement, Sir! never—for when I asked to play Miss Fanny Sterling, you handed me to the glass, bid me "look at myself, forgot I was a lady, and declared "I was ugly; which no woman can ever forgive!"

Mr. KNIVETON, strongly recommended from Manchester, came in the winter 1769 to York, and played several characters with merit and deserved success; but did not please in the lovers, in which cast I wanted Mr. Kniveton to supply the loss of the deserved favourite Mr. Frodsham;

whose natural abilities (as I before mentioned) should most undoubtedly have gained a fame equal to many who have been graced and honoured with tombs and monuments to their memories.

Mr. Kniveton only continued the York and Newcastle summer season, and then returned to his numerous and respectable friends at Manchester. After Whiteley's defeat by Mr. Mattocks's Royal Patentee regiment, he was engaged by the interest of Mr. Younger at Covent-Garden Theatre, and thence, by mutual agreement, was enrolled in some share of the property of the Liverpool New Theatre. He married a daughter of the late Mrs. Ward, sister to Mr. Ward, husband to the reputable Mrs. Ward, now of Drury-Lane Theatre. She was a lady of established merit, and well known in the theatrical world; was a very handsome woman, and a good actress.

Mr. Ward is well known as an actor of merit at all the principal theatres, and is now joint manager with Mr. Banks (who married the widow Kniveton) of the lucrative and respectable Theatre at Manchester, which flourishes with almost incredible success for near eight months in the year, dependent on itself alone, without a circuit.—Now, however, Chester helps out Manchester some few weeks.

Honest Kniveton, a foe to none, a friend to all, died in the prime of life, after excruciating agonies, of a swelled knee, at Liverpool, in the early part of the Patent Theatre.

In Passion Week, in 1769, Oratorios were undertaken at the York Theatre, and were particularly well attended: Good profits gave proof, and Mr. Baker, and three adventurers with him, shared to much advantage: Mr. Norris, and Mr. and Mrs. Pinto (Miss Brent) were engaged.

The Padlock was produced that year with uncommon effect; as indeed it was every where. I was esteemed a very good Mungo. The first night of opening, under the patronage of his Majesty, was on Saturday, April 8, 1769, for the benefit of Mrs. Baker, with the New Tragedy of the Fatal Discovery, and the Padlock, with the following occasional

PROLOGUE,

Spoken by Mr. WILKINSON, on opening the York Theatre, under the sanction of his Majesty's Patent.

Too long the Thespian Muse, an alien deem'd,
By stealth alone on YORK her influence beam'd;
Her wings curtail'd,—by Law forbade to roam,
And proud Augusta doom'd her partial home;
Scorning restraint, yet driven to submit,
And forc'd, alas! to smuggle sense and wit;

But still the Muse was lawless and disguis'd,
Hated by fools,—or worse,—by fools despis'd;
York's ancient Genius griev'd the sight to view,
His pride, his honour rous'd, like light'ning flew,
Indignant flew, and kneeling at the Throne,
To Britain's Sov'reign made his sorrows known:
Ebor's complaint our Sovereign soon redrest;
Our Sov'reign reigns, to make his subjects blest:—
The Muse exulting clapp'd her magic wings,
And, after bending to the best of Kings,
Swell'd her prophetic raptures, while around
Ebor's exulting vales re-echo'd the glad sound.

“ On these bright plains, belov'd by every Muse,
“ Which Phoebus daily blesses as he views,
“ The sister Muses patroniz'd by Laws,
“ Shall pour their magic in fair Virtue's cause;
“ Their Mirror and their Lash aloft shall rear,
“ While Vice and Folly cringe with dastard fear;
“ And York, as second in Britannia's isle,
“ Shall with Augusta share the genial smile.
“ Nor shall the grateful Muse forget what's due
“ To King, to Laws, to Country, and—to You.
“ Henceforth each circling year, on this glad day,
“ Cytherean groves shall swell the festive lay,
“ And every flow'r and sweet Parnassus yields,
“ The Muse shall plant in Ebor's smiling fields,
“ Garlands of which, compos'd from Taste's rich bed,
“ She'll weave in wreaths to grace each patron's head.”

Long have I wish'd for, what with joy I see,
The Muse once more restor'd to liberty:
My little All I ventur'd in her cause,
And the reward I wish is——your applause;
On your known candour cheerfully depend,
And hope a sanction from each generous friend.

At Newcastle, in the summer 1769, I engaged Mrs. IBBOT from Norwich, to supply the loss of Mrs. Baker. She possessed great merit, good voice, education, and understanding—not equal in expression to Mrs. Baker; her manner far from accomplished: however, if size was necessary, though Mrs. Baker was not a skeleton, yet Ibbot made more than treble amends as to the quantity. She acted Queen Elizabeth, take it altogether, better than any person I have seen (Mrs. Pope excepted).

Mrs. Ibbot played various parts with infinite ability, and would have been more successful on the Dublin and London stages, had her features been alluring. It is certain that the fascination of beauty, aided by the little god Cupid, has often thrown great merit to lie in obscurity, and exalted others far beyond their real right of arrogant pretensions, by blinding their beholders with the dazzle of charms, and obtaining what superior talents should only have had granted. There are few instances where the beauty joined to the good sense and behaviour of a Miss Farren are to be met with; or where the graceful and commanding expression of a Siddons, is united to a train of good qualities.

Mrs. Ibbot brought to Newcastle that year a Miss WILLOUGHBY, a young lady of family, and

elegant figure, with a sweet toned voice. She appeared at that place in Amelia in the English Merchant, and there and at York in several leading characters, and seemed to advance rapidly with the public; but her study and practice were too much for her youth, (for I believe she had not attained her nineteenth year when she left me:) She fell into a deep and rapid decline, which neither art, care, nor advice could possibly prevent.

In Miss Willoughby the stage lost an ornament of great promise, for she was a credit to the theatre in every part of her conduct. The youths of fashion beheld her with respect and admiration, and the matrons with tokens of benignity and tenderness. She had a sister who tried the stage, but without the least pretensions in any one point, being destitute of every requisite: Yet to see how our stage opinions may be warped and go decidedly wrong, Mrs. Ibbot who was her patroness, pronounced she would make a better actress than her sister Miss Willoughby just mentioned; but a worse could not be, nor has she turned out a credit to her sister's memory or her friend's recommendation;—quite the contrary in every point—but flesh is frail, the best sometimes forget: Yet I must hint of this unfortunate frail one, that no pains had been spared in bringing her up rigidly in the paths of virtue; and it is

more strange she should have been fond of the *vanities* of this world and err,—as I was assured by Mrs. Ibbot, she was bred in a *Nunnery*.

At Hull, in the winter 1769, Mrs. Ibbot left me, on account of what she termed ill usage, and not entirely without some cause to ground just complaint against me; but Mrs. Powell, lately mentioned, was then getting corpulent, and fit only for those parts Mrs. Ibbot acted. Powell and wife were of great utility, and of much consequence in an extensive catalogue of plays, therefore a decree of a degrading nature was given against my old acquaintance Sarah Ibbot, who I had long known, having often met her in Ireland and Bath. However she had too good a spirit to endure insult, and very properly left me for her favourite spot, the Norwich Theatre, and part of her relations, who were all respectable, lived in that neighbourhood. There she remained till a rich relation died in the latter end of April 1787, who left her most of his fortune, or perhaps the whole. On her attaining so good an income, and feeling secure from all the blasts of penury, she wisely retired from the stage, and lives with every comfort, but within the bounds of her fortune; for she was ever of a penurious turn. I hope she will enjoy her few remaining years with that serenity and health her toils and patience have entitled her to.

Also the season at Hull 1769, I engaged Mr. and Mrs. KING. He was very attentive, and played some fops well. Mrs. King gave goodly tokens of a promising improvement: She was much approved in Lady Townly and Jenny in Lionel. Though she was almost new to the stage, they could not prolong their engagement, as they were under agreement with David Ross, Esq. who was just then made Patentee of Edinburgh theatre, which was christened lawful that year 1769. I shall have occasion to mention them hereafter in the course of my travels, which is the reason I have here given them this short introduction to the good friend I have now by the hand.

I had during my three years' acting, as manager, lost two prompters. One was a Mr. FLOOR, who left me at Newcastle, 1768, who is now at Bath in the same situation; then a Mr. BRYAN, who had been a parishioner of my father's in the Savoy, and who died of a complication of diseases.

A Miss MINGAY, daughter of the Comptroller at Hull, and entitled to some small fortune, which was soon dissipated, packed up her tatters and followed us to York, and with her mother's consent (for she had lost her father) made her first appearance on any stage, in the character of

Monimia. I cannot say much to her credit: She was quite unequal to the task:—However Monimia's cares were soothed by the addresses of a youthful lover, who being of the swindling kind, was attracted by hearing her boast of her family and fortune. The Adonis obtained his Venus's affections from the great account of a capital farm and riches, which he informed her he possessed. Two minds so happily paired snapped at each other's bait, and they were speedily united in the bands of wedlock: It was each *bite the biter*. When the mutual cheat was discovered, love had little to do with tying the knot the stronger; they soon parted to the joy of each other, and found the marriage chain was not adamant, but easier broke, and without those obstacles that many experience to obstruct separation: But the reader will observe there was no money for lawyers, consequently no impediment. So they parted like Mr. and Mrs. Sullen, "South, north, east, west—far as the poles asunder."

She wandered for some time from place to place in England and the different parts of Scotland, and at last returned to Hull, where she lives upon the right of some small inheritance; was a widow for several years, but is now married to an industrious working man, whose name is Clark. She, like me, (and others of equal conse-

quence) has favoured the world *a-la-mode* with her Life—*that's the sort!*—How kind of me and that *amiable lady* to oblige the world with our labours—all for the good of our country. And that I am from top to toe a *monstratious* good writer must be acknowledged; nay, Mrs. Inchbald has assured me she admires my works; and women are the best judges after all. Indeed she would never say so unless she really thought so—that would be impossible; and I esteem her dearly, as it is pleasing to be flattered by those we love. And indeed, good reader, I am not quite so ignorant as not to imagine I esteem it as a courtesy, not as a right, to be indulged with the favour of your leisure hour; for know, if I have any vanity, it is a laughable one: I do freely confess and profess, that it is the outside of my incoherent medley that tickles my fancy, more than the inside of my folly, and to such a degree, that I laugh involuntarily whenever I see my calf volumes in my book-case, marked with *glaring golden* letters, WILKINSON'S WORKS, closely wedged and pent secure from moth and rust, the invincible Shakespear on one side, and Dryden on the other, as centinels of protection. There is a pleasure in being mad, which none but madmen know—So don't! prithee, don't strike at me now I am down.

The spring of this year, 1770, Oratorios were again tried, but on a narrower scale than those of the former year, 1769. In Passion-week they were presented to the public. Tenducci and Norris were engaged; but the gains of the first year were lost by the second experiment.

On the Saturday evening, in Passion-week, I had been sitting late with company at Tenducci's lodgings, with Dr. Wallis and a large party: Tenducci had brought some excellent wines from London, to enable him to brook our Yorkshire atmosphere during his short residence at York; after full libations, about four o'clock in the morning, I was hastily called for, with the information that Mr. Baker could not live an hour, and that my attendance was immediately requisite. When I arrived, Dr. Swainston was in his chamber, who assured me his advice could not be of any assistance; it was a decay of Nature, not illness; and that Mr. Baker could not exist one hour longer; and seeing my deranged state, eyes half blind, occasioned by the fatigues of the evening and keeping it up—*that's your fort!*—kindly hinted, that if I did not lead a more regular life, and keep better hours, I must inevitably soon follow the worthy old Mr. Baker. The Doctor's words were truly prophetic as to the *old gentleman*, for *he*, almost immediately, without a groan, expired on that said Easter Sunday, in

the morning, April 15, 1770. But I am now here, blessed be God, scratching this account tolerably in health, and full of sweet disposition this 21st of June, 1793.

In consequence of Mr. Baker's death the bell tolled, and I from regent became *sole* monarch of the Theatre and Theatres, and had the pleasure of early pressures for the payment of long bills, in as speedy a manner as possible, whether convenient or inconvenient. The first was that week for Mr. Baker's loss, 40l. for the Tenducci Oratorio; but that was a trifle for a manager—So, ding dong, I engaged and ordered Mr. Williams*, an excellent scene painter, to undertake no less than 500l. in scenery, which created good bills for canvas, colours, timber, &c.—The wardrobe was vulgar; I asked the Lady Townly, I asked Calista their opinions, they agreed with me it was all a *horrid bore*! I asked the Public—O! Mr. Wilkinson was perfectly right!—a charming Manager!—such spirit!—such generosity!—he deserved every encouragement!—he need never fear being rewarded!—This was really all sunshine, and the pleasure of running into debt was pursued without thinking of the hazard, as will hereafter appear. It is true I ever had credit, for my cash was sunk to

* Mr. Williams painted the scenery for Mr. Love, for whom the Richmond Theatre in Surry was built;

Mr. Baker as before mentioned; and though the property was more than equivalent, yet so much was wanted, that I was under the necessity of encountering all the difficulties, or the scheme could never have succeeded. Mr. Baker died greatly in debt, (my money included) not less than Three Thousand Pounds; and the two Patents for York and Hull, in my name, cost me near 500*l*. So that it is well matters have succeeded as they have. The scenery for the last change in Cymon, which was revived before the close of the season, cost me no less than fifty guineas; a heavy sum for a country Theatre: for there is a wide difference as to what an audience can afford in the different towns in the kingdom.

The Jubilee had been produced on Saturday, April 7, 1770, for my York benefit night, and with a great degree of credit. That was the winter it was first got up, attended with great expence and magnificence at Drury-Lane Theatre, when Mr. Garrick and Mrs. Abington walked in the characters of Benedick and Beatrice. Miss Young (now Mrs. Pope) was the Tragic Muse.

In June I advanced with my troops to the northern frontiers, and took possession once more of ancient Newcastle; but was not received with noble greeting: Rebellion reared its head; my occupation was no more. Messrs. Austin and Heatton had for three winters persuaded Mr.

Baker to let his Theatre to them, and insinuated themselves so well into the good graces and opinions of the audience there, that notwithstanding neither their actors nor wardrobe were so good, yet it fixed a relish for winter plays. The summer after Mr. Baker's death was the finishing of a lease of the Newcastle Theatre. The gentlemen of Newcastle insisted I should either give them a winter season, instead of the summer, or relinquish the town, for they would not have two companies each year; nor would they have plays but in the winter season *only*. Yet the Newcastle opinion is not universal, for with an empty town, (if London ever can be so) the Haymarket Theatre can boast as elegant a shew of fashion as either of the winter Theatres. And it is not more extraordinary than true, that the two well-known capital commercial cities of this opulent and polished kingdom (daily rising in knowledge, affluence, and riches) are remarkable for their attention to a summer Theatre. As an incontestible proof, the Theatres of Liverpool and Birmingham have often been opened with a good company, and without success: Nay, to confirm my assertion, even Mrs. Siddons, as late as the year 1789, at Liverpool, greatly failed as to her usual attraction that winter season, her benefit night excepted: Leeds is situated better than any town

in Yorkshire for a summer theatrical residence in many respects, on account of the populous neighbouring villages and villas that surround it, which would be attended with much more inconvenience and expence in cold and severe weather. Newcastle with the assistance of a race-week in June, and the affize-week before the York races, and a few good benefit nights, when genteel company were assembled, made out the summer as to credit, the paying expences, and above all, combining the company together for the whole year. However, as I could not comply with their proposal, (as I then thought, though since I have changed that opinion,) I relinquished that spacious and rich mine, and at a great expence built a Theatre at Leeds, finishing my Newcastle stage career in the character of Lear. August 1770, I left that town in great dudgeon and *very sulky*, and as soon as leisure would permit rushed into Leeds, without any persons being warm in their promises or their expectations. They never had a decent Theatre, but had been harrassed out with plays, by a set of bad conducted players, void of merit as performers; and their incomes being poor and precarious, and their minds void of principle, any degree of common credit by the million could not be granted to the honest player; as the lower order of life seldom can discriminate. However

I purchased ground, and not on the most favourable spot for convenience in many respects; but the reader must wait for the particulars from the month of September till the July following, when a full and true account of the Leeds Theatre shall be announced at the time of opening; Therefore I here leave bricklayers, joiners, painters, &c. in full employment in October 1770, and will pay them a visit at a proper season, and see what they have done against July 1771.

The York races previous, did not produce any remarkable honours or events; London Peers or their ladies had not at that time honoured our humble boards. A Mr. Swan of York, a gentleman of fortune, was at once a friend and an enemy. When his directions and teachings were obeyed, he was the prince of flatterers, and would eagerly stray from house to house to praise or abuse me, just as his mandates at the Theatre were adhered to or neglected. In his younger part of life he had been deputed manager for two years of Aungier-street Theatre in Dublin, then conducted by several persons of distinction.

In the Hull season 1770, and the York 1771, Mr. DIBBLE DAVIS (once of Covent-Garden, then of the Haymarket in the summer season) was with me, who brought in his hand a fair damsel, who went by the name of DAVIS, but

whose real name I believe was OGILVIE. He was useful, and did not want merit on the stage; was the original Mr. Loader in the Minor, and played it very well. She had a considerable share of merit, and was handsome and sprightly. Mr. Davis has had three if not four ladies to whom he has been *really* married; the two last of very creditable parents, and in good circumstances: As to his other wives they must, as Macheath hints, keep their own secrets. Davis may really say—

“Ye gods, what havoc doth old Time make!”

I do attest, and so can many now living, that thirty years ago (save the blemish of an eye) he was a handsome man—but now, O! ye gods! how fallen! how changed! He is nearly a spectacle for observation: The brittle glass never can be shook with more likelihood of raising the mind to reflect on mortality, than when chance directs the eye to meet or look on Davis! Whether the imprudence of youth, or merely the hand of old father Time has made this dreadful waste in the human frame, I cannot determine; but it is impossible to see Davis and not be serious and contemplative. He is now, though in years, not to be called *very* old—I surmise about sixty; yet he appears past help, past hope, past cure!—If imprudence has had any share in the calamity, it

should be a lesson for youth, first to carefully preserve the blessing of health, without which, well-flowered beauty in one sex, and the strength of Hercules in the other, the hand of sickness or depravity, changes the form with as quick dexterity as we on the stage can conjure in our Pantomimes by the help of the miller's grinding or Medusa's kettle, and produce the old turned young, and the young transformed to the old. However the said Mr. Davis, with all his misfortunes on his back, and to bear the burthen whether he will or no, is not destitute of the assistance of Providence, at a time he could not otherwise assist himself; he, by being engaged several years at Covent-Garden Theatre, is I believe entitled to the benefits arising from the Theatrical Fund: A most laudable and humane institution, first suggested by my worthy and much esteemed friend Mr. Thomas Hull. Mr. Davis also acquired money, till within these few years, by benefit plays occasionally at the Hay-market Theatre in the winter season, by permission of the Lord Chamberlain. Another resource, (which gratified his pride and helped his pocket) was, his being indefatigable in teaching youngsters to act; and at such and such prices they daily attended to receive his instructions, how they might proceed to be initiated in future as his Majesty's servants, and become candidates for

being created Kings, Lords, and Barons. Young ladies also, bit with stage frenzy, paid tribute to Davis for the same laudable purpose, in hopes of a patent from their tutor to become a Lady Townly, a Lady Bab Lardoon, or my Lady Teazle: And to complete his good fortune on his sun's decline, his present wife, who within these few years bestowed her hand on the *irresistible* Davis, is young, very pretty, a more than promising actress in Mrs. Jordan's cast of parts, has great life and much merit, and added to her talents as an actress, *I am told*, she sings very well, and is universally allowed to be as a wife, the most remarkably attentive that any man could wish his mate to be; and every duty that any woman with propriety can possess, is put in daily practice, and in the strictest sense performed by Mrs. Davis. That lady has only been three or four years on the stage; much approved at Birmingham, Margate, and still more so at Manchester. She was seduced from a good engagement at Manchester to engage at Covent-Garden, in February 1792, and was well received in Mrs. Jordan's favourite part of the Rump. But that part was certainly ill chosen, not only by drawing comparisons, that must end in injury to so weak a competitor, against such an established genius as Mrs. Jordan, who has fashion, justice, and partiality to sup-

port her: Therefore the weak efforts of a young candidate, should have chose a character where sense and plot would help the dialogue, and by those means interest the audience in favour of a young beginner: For surely it must have been Mrs. Jordan alone who could have made so execrable a piece as the cut farce of the Rump, draw audiences for not only a number of nights, but what is more extraordinary, a number of seasons; and to be followed so long is not to the credit of the town, the managers, or the actors, nor to the author of Love in a Village, Maid of the Mill, Lionel and Clarissa, &c. Mrs. Davis I hope will have every justice her youth and merit deserves——

“Grow sweet to sense and lovely to the eye,”

I do not recollect any remarkable circumstance at Hull, so will proceed to January 1771, when I opened the York Theatre, which was newly decorated with the King's Arms and other embellishments, variety of new clothes, scenes, &c. I was high in public favour, and do not remember any season from that period to this when the theatre was so regularly and fashionably attended: There was a remarkable number of genteel families that year at York, which must ever preponderate in favour of a Theatre, provided they are theatrically inclined, *which is not always the case.* I do not recollect so numerous

a resort of leading families since that year. Bath and London is the word: And it is probable had I the same means and was independent, I should be of the same *Turkish opinion*, as we players phrase it, and could twine and loll as well as the best of them. What a pity it is to be such a poor devil as I am!—as variety I love,—and, like Sir John Brute, what I liked yesterday I do not like to-day, and what I like to-day, it is odds I may not like to-morrow.

In 1771, Sir Griffith Boynton was High Sheriff, and bought 40l. in tickets on his Saturday's play in the assize-week. Sir William St. Quintin filled that office the year following, and bought 35l. in tickets. The expence, the ensuing summer assize-week, was mentioned at Bluitt's Inn, and it was agreed, that it was not only an enormous, but an unnecessary tax, as the Sheriff's play would always be fashionably attended. It was therefore resolved in future, that the High Sheriff and Gentlemen of the Grand Jury should countenance a night at the Theatre, the Sheriff send five guineas to the Manager for his ticket, and have no more trouble or expence about the matter: which rule has been strictly observed to this day.

In this spring I had the pleasure of receiving my old esteemed friend Mr. Woodward, as a visitor at my own house, as well as a performer on

the York stage. His first appearance was on Tuesday, April 17, 1771, Marplot and the Citizen. He acted Bobadil and the Apprentice his second night; the third, Captain Ironsides, and Buck in The Englishman in Paris. The houses were all well attended: His benefit was on Saturday, April 27, the last night of his performing; Ranger in the Suspicious Husband, and Razor the Political Barber, in the Upholsterer, with the Fine Gentleman in Lethe: His night was patronized by Dr. Wallas, who was then the Lord Mayor of York.

Mr. WESTON also played five or six nights, and was much admired in Scrub and Jerry Sneak, Sir Harry Sycamore, Jerry Blackacre, Doctor Last in his Chariot, and Abel Druggier.

To mention the merits of the several York performers would be unavoidably entering into a detail, which might please some and displease others: To readers unacquainted with the York Theatre it cannot be entertaining; and to the inhabitants, where the company are known and remembered, they have an undoubted right to judge for themselves, and my unasked opinion would not perhaps be approved by any party.

The West Indian, the first time at York, was for my benefit on Saturday, April 13, 1771. Woodward was at the play, and was much fur-

prised at the brilliancy of the ladies who honoured me with their appearance on that occasion. I mention this trifling circumstance as it so far relates to Theatrical History: It was that spring that the Comedy of the West Indian was produced at Drury-Lane Theatre, which contributed so greatly to the advantage and reputation of Mr. Cumberland as the author of that piece, and Mr. Moody as the actor of Major O'Flaharty.

Sir Griffith Boynton that year desired me to study Jaques in *As You Like it*; in which part I gained some degree of credit from that time till my misfortune of a broken leg, which happened on the 27th of March, 1788, since which I have seldom made my appearance, though treated with great marks of kindness whenever I have the honour to perform. I am now past the mending, it being impossible for me to improve in the profession; and the defects of age, the less familiarized to an audience by only being seen occasionally, certainly the seldomer the better, (unless where necessity for daily bread pleads the excuse, and in that case pity not pleasure, must be the result of the reflective auditor) as I have been at stage work more or less from the year 1757, which in April 1794 will amount to no fewer years than 37, and all employed in a theatrical life: Therefore whether I think of it or no, or like it or no, I must soon sink into oblivion,

even should existence continue longer than I have any reason to expect. I have neither sufficient attention, nor care truly requisite for longevity; and with all my caution Mr. Death will certainly either overtake or meet me full butt, and by one stroke put me *quite out* of breath. But in this book I am to treat of what I once did, and not of what I now cannot do.

The year Sir Griffith Boynton was High Sheriff he was so very liberal and attentive to serve me, that I could not refuse his invitation to attend York at the summer assizes; a circumstance then not in practice in my time, nor I believe for many years, Newcastle being the summer residence, and so distant, and furnishing an assize-week at that town, which was more numerously attended by the neighbouring families. The fashionable resort for York, is in the spring assizes in the month of March; nor have I often opened the Theatre in the summer assize-week there, unless with a star, which has turned out very inconvenient and not productive, unless a Siddonian comet appeared, or unless it falls so near the races, as to get that week in at one expence. For if I move the company, for my emolument, out of their usual rout and where they are not to derive any advantages, but have to pull the oar in hot weather every evening, it is but reasonable to reward them with double salaries: if I did not,

revolt might be the consequence—and what is a King without his guards?—For as Trim says, “ ’Tis numbers at command that makes an Alexander.” Therefore, with the expence of our baggage-waggons, carriages, &c. to go and come, that week is not so lucrative of itself, as to bear the extraordinary supplies required for such an expedition, unless on some very interesting and commanding occasion. But against that week of Sir Griffith Boynton’s I had been preparing at an expence that must have surpris’d any London critic who was at York that July affizes 1771, and who at that time saw Dryden’s Masque of King Arthur, with most splendid and good scenery, and all the changes as at Drury-Lane, painted by Williams, and very well indeed. Its first night of representation was on Tuesday, July 16—An odd accident occurred that evening; the change where the bridge and the enchanted tree break, instead of the sword of valour, wielded by its noble King, its magic lost its force, as the tree, in particular, entirely failed; which provoked me so highly, after all the pains taken, and the enormous expence, that two or three blundering carpenters should destroy the labour of a year—that thus perplexed I advanced forward, and requested the audience would honour me with a few minutes for preparation, and permit the act to begin

again; this being granted, all that had been so fatally unhinged was hinged again, and to the agreeable surprise of the audience, and no less pleasing satisfaction of myself, not one blunder occurred, but all was smooth as the gentle waves where the Mermaids were lolling on the waters of tin and canvas to allure the love-sick Arthur.

Mr. and Mrs. KING were engaged at that time; the same persons mentioned at Hull. She had improved herself much in the time she had been from Hull: Her figure was striking; she was well-received. Her first appearance in York was in Lady Townly, Monday July 15, 1771. She acted Emmeline also in Arthur, and took the lead in every principal character in tragedy and comedy. Her person, as I have before observed, was good; her voice not musical nor very powerful, but a great deal of spirit, always perfect, well dressed, and of good private behaviour, which gained esteem as did the great punctuality of payments from her and Mr. King: A matter of more importance on and off the stage, and to every rank, than many imagine. Indeed, she was then daily improving in public opinion, as the course of my narrative will shew; therefore I for the present leave Mrs. King in her pleasant stage career, and introduce

Mr. and Mrs. HITCHCOCK to the reader's notice,—aye, and worthy notice too, if modest worth is judged good company. Mr. Hitchcock can boast (or I can vouch for him, and many others of more weight) as clear a bosom from stain, and as good an understanding, supported by rectitude, as would grace any profession: In few words, Mr. Hitchcock is valuable as a friend, and is *truly* an honest man, and that is saying a great deal, and to the purpose; but as he himself is not a man of many words, I am sure he will think I have said enough.

Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock came from the Norwich company; and on Saturday, July 13, 1771, she made her first appearance. The chosen character for her *entrée* was Rosetta in Love in a Village. She was not then or since capital as a proficient in singing; but had a neat figure, was easy in carriage, and very lively.—She acts the girls with applause on the Dublin stage to this day, and looks as young, I am told, as her daughter;—of whose merits I shall treat in my stage procession of walking shadows, in due course. They have a large family, and a son of promise as to genius, who has been indefatigable in his studies. His father has never neglected his duty in giving good education to all his children. His elder born, Robert, of whom I am speaking, has had his education in Trinity College, Dublin,

where he has obtained prizes and compliments from that learned and respectable body. The lively spirited Mrs. Hitchcock retains the powers of youth in every respect, and for that name seems determined, from the blessing of her endeavours, to have it perpetuated to the end of time. To see her on the stage, a stranger would hardly suppose it credible, that that little woman should have laboured so well in her vocation, and yet appear so youthful.

I mentioned in my Memoirs some particulars of Mr. Hitchcock, also his History of the Irish Stage in one volume: He is now busily employed in finishing a second. I shall therefore leave them at present, as we shall often encounter and jostle in the various meetings and farewells, that occur in this medley: For they have left me and returned again as often as Mr. Charles Wood: Sometimes from interested motives, sometimes from caprice; sometimes in good humour, sometimes in bad; sometimes in hopes of meeting again, at another time vowing quite the contrary: For what we players say in a rage, we mind no more (when the wind alters and the humour bites) than a lover's oath or a great man's promise; we being as variable in our dispositions as the weather. The private esteem of managers and performers quickly alters; as our theatrical barometer is in general either very cloudy

or a fine sunshine; very high or very low. An object starting unexpectedly extracting the golden ore and pouring it into the manager's coffers, has a wonderful effect upon his eyes, his nerves, his breathing, and his disposition. On the other side, a tempting offer from another theatre, with every assurance of friendship, support, and due attention to merit, with a large salary, and superior promise for a succeeding year, the gentleman or lady are immediately convinced they are not treated well in many respects; they regard Mr. Wilkinfon as manager, but that is no reason why their prime of life should be lost, because they are only tolerably treated;—it is a time to do self justice:—The first part sent after these meditations and soliloquies in private, is returned with disdain. The manager then expostulates; both parties quarrel, and *exeunt* in a rage, with the most solemn assurances of never seeing each other again.—This puts me in mind of Leopold and Lilla in the Siege of Belgrade;—the verse runs thus—

“ You have chang'd your mind, believe me——

“ No—I told you so before.

“ Can you have a heart to leave me?

“ Yes—I'll never see you more.

“ Never more,

“ Never more.”

Then they laugh and shake hands like manager and actresses, and go off lovingly, singing

“Never more my love shall leave me”——

And ever so it is with us. A year, or perhaps a few months, convince the sworn severed party, that the same motives that occasioned the separation (interest) joins them in theatrical commerce again: They shake hands never more to part; but that perhaps is as uncertain a dependent on chance as their first friendly junction. If the reader is not of stage profession, I am letting the lady or gentleman too much into the secrets of our mysterious rights, by this peep behind the curtain.—But says the courteous peruser—“I am “pestered with reading such nonsense!—Indeed, indeed, Wilkinson, I pity you.”—I can only in palliation for my tediousness reply as Theophilus Cibber did to his father, (Colley Cibber) who on seeing his son most ridiculously accoutred, with a look of contempt took his pinch of snuff and said,—“Indeed, Theo. I pity you!” On which the vain son turned on his heel and whimsically replied,—“Don’t pity me Sir,—pity my tailor.” So says Tate Wilkinson, “Don’t pity me, “reader, but pity my printer!” And indeed here and there the reader must meet with wit: For if I have not wit in myself, (and therefore of course cannot create it in others) yet I take the

sanction of dramatic materials for my practice, under the countenance of which I steal, and wit will sometimes perforce pop up (now and then) unexpectedly.

I here suddenly perceive that I have imperceptibly strayed out of my road, and must journey back from July 1771, to the month of February of the same year, as I have omitted a very particular anecdote at the York Theatre, which happened at that time, relative to Mr. Thomas Powell, whose benefit was on Saturday, Feb. 25, 1771, and was particularly well attended that season, owing to an occurrence I will here relate—The receipt was 115l. 6s. 6d. which sum has seldom been exceeded at common prices, though the Theatre now contains considerably more auditors.

Mr. Powell's interest was strong as a native, and was greatly forwarded that winter, particularly from the aid given by the *first appearance* of a young gentleman of York city, whose name was BARKER: He was well educated, and heir to a good fortune, but at that time infatuated with the charms which then appeared so enticing and fascinating at the playhouse. There, all seemed in possession of mutual love and peace—the players did in harmony delight—no passions appeared to ruffle the men; consequently it occurred to Mr. Barker, how should

such a set of amiables ever quarrel.—The manager by such a round of blifs, surely must be happy here, there, and every where.—Nor did he descry by his accidental visits, ought that disturbed the bosoms of the ladies ; they were only gently lifted up and down by tides, where no storms discovered wrath upon their lovely features. Viewing this seat of calm serenity, where pleasure, unalloyed with pain or discord, seemed to have fixed her seat, no wonder if young Barker's mind was bereaved of rest ; for the Theatre proving the hag that rid him in his dreams, the coming day only served to stretch his youthful imagination more upon the rack : Therefore as no persuasions could divert his thoughts from his darling object the stage, his father at last consented to his bathing in the fiery lake, thinking it better to let him appear under his own wing, and take the candid judgment of his friends, than let him follow his desperate pursuits, by wandering from one company to another in search of fame, where many want their daily bread—a monarch at night, waking penniless in the morning. This said young gentleman, “ Hot with the Tuscan grape and high in blood,” plunged headlong into the theatric stream, and mingled with the laughing gods : Our Jupiter received him graciously, Apollo hailed him with songs of triumph, Momus shook his sides, Venus ogled, Minerva looked jealous, and Juno only seemed displeased ; but

our Paris Barker rejected Venus, who was ready prepared for the golden pippin, and respectfully presented the apple to his favourite Willoughby. He made his debut on the said 25th of February, in the character of Aribert in Rowe's Tragedy of the Royal Convert: And it cannot be a matter of surprise to relate, that Mr. Barker, surrounded by friends, should be received with repeated plaudits throughout the whole of that evening's performance. It was said, (with what truth I know not) that his passion for the stage was greatly increased by another, more potent than the first: The pretty Miss Willoughby was at that time in the company, and her charms had scorched the heart and soul of our inspired stage innamorato. She was his Ethelinda; and certainly he appeared to more advantage in the love scenes with her, than in any other in that play.

After that onset Mr. Barker played Juba and Romeo. His person and manner were pleasing: His voice was equally so; but not sufficiently powerful. Whenever he appeared he drew audiences, and was always favourably received: But whether having tried the experiment, and found it not that Mahomet's paradise he had formed——

“ Where each his blooming beauty on his side,

“ Drinking rich streams that in full rivers glide;

“ There in the garden of eternal spring,
“ Where birds of Paradise around us sing;
“ Ecstatic bliss shall every hour employ,
“ And every sense be lost in every joy.”

Now, whether all this glorious fancied picture fell short of his expectation, and that he would not aspire to be as great a man as I am,—*a king of shreds and patches*,—or from that natural fluctuation of whim, fancy, or inclination, of which in part most mortals have the ingredients in a smaller or a greater degree, I know not, nor ever could divine the true cause; but it is certain in a few months after he had pleased his stage-struck fancy, he relinquished all future acquaintance with either the muses, the stage, or any of its appurtenances. He was as changeable as Millamour, who is at one time for the bar, then for this, and then for that profession in life: So our hero, at the sound of the trumpet, called for his sword and shield—invoked the spirit of his fire—discarded all stage dalliances—and breathed a son of Hector; that is, he actually purchased a commission in a troop of horse: The hat and feather, red coat, long-sword, and walking with the ladies, occasioned an entire forgetfulness of those he once thought great as Peers and Princesses in the theatrical drawing-room: He turned his back unto the ladder, scorning the base degrees by which he did ascend, and

whilst this *nouvelle* and grand new stage of life, the elevation of the mind and body lasted, kept to that mode of thinking. But as every situation has its different stages, so was it in this. His time grew heavy, and the dangling walk, or the fierce strut,—what he had for some time thought exalted—he now saw in a less enviable view, than when his imagination was heated with the fumes of youthful vanity, till by degrees, as the charms faded on one hand, so his inclination for some more solid and permanent situation, for the improvement of his time and talents, increased on the other; he like Millamour again gave a sudden spring, neglected war and its alarms, left his spear and shield, and from the buskin and the army, he put on the petticoat;—that is, he put on the gown and cassock. He studied the best of all studies, that of religion, with fervour, and I firmly believe without hypocrisy, and soon obtained his admission into holy orders; and being independent, he from that hour to the present has led a life of honour and comfort to himself, administering, as far as in his power, instruction to others as a preacher. He is likewise a scholar and a gentleman; free from incumbrances or wants—Many of our clergy would envy such a lot. After this he married a young lady of the name of Wycliffe, with a genteel fortune. He, in his holy profession, is highly

respectable; and I dare assert in his behalf, that when his tomb-stone relates to the giddy or the grave, the moral or the immoral reader, it may with truth declare to the inspector of death, that Mr. Barker ever was a good young man, a worthy citizen, a good actor, soldier, and reverend pastor;—and above all, when he dies, he will die fearing Heaven. A character worthy the peruser's imitation.

Mr. CHARLES WOOD, also of York, in the winter 1771, made his first appearance at that city in the character of Lord Aimworth, on Tuesday, January 22. His relations were very respectable in that city: He was bred to the business of a druggist, and was an apprentice to the well-remembered, well-beloved Mr. John Wright, who died in the month of April, 1788. Mr. Wood possessed a good person, and when a lad was bred up in the Choir of the Cathedral, by which means his natural musical talents received some advantageous improvements. But seeing plays when under Mr. Wright, made him say to himself, like Dick in the Apprentice,—“ Shall my genius be cramped over a pestle and mortar! “ No, no! my name must be passed in capitals— “ The part of Macheath by a young gentleman “ who never appeared on any stage.” His ambition fired at the thought; therefore, not looking

in the muses' looking-glass but for deceptions, not realities, he never retired to ruminate on the hazard of his being hissed, pelted, laughed at, nor admitted into the Green Room, but kept such busy intruders upon his thoughts from gaining the least ground: Consequently, as soon as his servitude with Mr. Wright was finished, he resigned the bolusses, the draughts, the hiera picra, and jalap—and to perfect the picture, eloped to experience wit, humour, gaiety, and all the visionary joys of theatrical fetes, where he supposed discord never entered the airy joyful throng; where penury was a stranger, and malice never admitted;—there Bacchus with his jovial crew, and Venus with her Graces were only triumphant.

His first engagement was I believe with the noted James Whiteley, where he remained about a year, then presented himself to me, and was so well received, that he was immediately engaged: His second part was Cromwell in Henry the VIII. He continued with me as a sincere friend and servant of the public till seduced, in 1775, to join Whiteley's troop by Mr. Powell before mentioned, who is a distant relation. No performer was ever upon better terms with me; but he ever was precarious, and often left my royal court, returned and was received again: But to enumerate the dates of all his desertions

and returnings, would take up too much of the reader's time. He has particular good qualities, such as great honesty, fidelity, a well-wisher to every one, and an enemy to none; has a good natural understanding, and makes one particular praise-worthy use of it, which is a mark of his good sense: For he not only likes his neighbour as himself, but never defames or speaks ill of any person behind his back; nor would he ever give me, from Ireland or any other place, his opinion of any one performer when referred to for information as to their deserts, good or bad; and however urged, has always begged to be excused, as he never would have it lay on his mind the deciding on the merits of any person whose bread was depending, but left their conduct, if engaged, to tell for itself. He is very good natured, and as generous as his poor pocket will permit. Where the good of his country is mentioned he is rather tenacious, and then his zeal cannot be repressed; his Roman soul bursts forth—not the Widow of Malabar mounts on the burning pile with more resolution, than the patriotic Charles Wood when the master string is struck and Great Britain pronounced to be in danger.—He immediately recruits armies, (and not without the assistance of the navy) takes towns and destroys shipping, here, there, and

every where;—he cuts and flashes with his broad sword, and plays the very devil with the enemy.

“He owns the glorious subject fires his breast,

“And his soul’s darling passion stands confest;

“Think England’s peace bought cheaply with his
“blood,

“And die with pleasure for his country’s good.”

He married some years since a Miss MUCK-LOW, who if she has not been conspicuous as a shining actress, has as Mrs. WOOD, been an ornament to private life—being a pattern of industry in providing and taking every care of a numerous offspring. She is a good wife and a good mother, and as zealous for the honour and fame of her husband as he is for politics, which he pursues with an avidity much more than he ever did the stage; for I cannot boast of his unremitting labours in that point. Indeed, let the world wag as it will, it never discomposes his spirits or brings on reflection; but dare to mention ever so slightly a plot against the Crown, or an infringement on our Laws or the British Constitution, on that theme

“Question enrages him, and he calls for lights!

“More lights! when oh! dire omen, he strikes the

“Arras

“Where the famous tale is interwoven,

“How the unhappy Theban slew his father.”

He often reminds me of Dryden's lines,

“ Touch but the cause which hurts his brain,
 “ His eye-balls roll, and he is mad again.”

And indeed I am of opinion with my friend Charles Wood, that a rebellion in church or state is seldom good for a nation, and must ever thin our congregations at the theatres.

From Mr. Wood's being long in Dublin, at the Haymarket three or four summer seasons, and at various theatres in the kingdom, such as York, Manchester, Worcester, &c. it may be supposed he is well versed in a various catalogue of all the stock operas and plays. His memory however is not always secure, the best sometimes forget; yet he is very remarkable in one difficult point, knows every other performer's part with minuteness, but *not always* so with his own, and can prompt them without the help of a book. He has many friends, few if any enemies, and is the Charles Honeycomb* of the theatre; When he errs it is like Cassio, in ignorance and not in cunning†, or I have no knowledge of an honest face.

I will now adjourn from the assizes at York, 1771, to the opening of Leeds Theatre, Wed-

* Honeycomb in the Spectator.

† Desdemona does not mean ignorance here, but inattention; not thinking of or meaning ill to others.

nesday July 24, of the same year. The play was "A Word to the Wife," with Mr. Murphy's farce of "What we must all come to." The Theatre was built very neat—aye, and very splendid, comparatively speaking to the very mean places, such as the barns, warehouses, &c. to which they had been accustomed. However, with the help of good scenery, wardrobe, and in truth, a very excellent company, with a various and strong catalogue of plays, the houses were well attended, and gave hopes that the seeds of promise were sown and would produce a plentiful harvest and a lasting produce. Four weeks only as manager was my first experiment. I was not aided then or since by much assistance as to personal connexions there, but am from long intercourse well known by every body as to general acquaintance; and if I wanted credit in any tradesman's books, have not the least doubt but I might pay myself the compliment to declare, that not any shop would refuse, but be glad of the custom of Tate Wilkinson, manager of the Leeds Theatre. But at that period it was not so; for the inhabitants not being accustomed to any players of tolerable credit, and the lower order having suffered greatly by the depredations of dishonesty, and perhaps real distress and penury in the extreme, made every one shy of giving credit or countenance; which was rather strange,

considering the vicinity of the opulent town of Leeds to the city of York. As to patrons I had none, and was an entire stranger, except to Alderman Kenyon and his lady, who were at that time particularly kind, not only as to constant friendly invitations, but were also strenuous props to the Theatre at that necessary juncture, never failing in their due attendance for mine and the company's welfare. Past kindnesses should never be forgot, as indeed at that time neither the wind, the rain, nor the weather ever kept Mr. or Mrs. Kenyon from the Theatre; and whenever I despaired of success, I well remember Mr. Kenyon remarked and prophesied, that in time, with perseverance and tolerable attention to the entertainment of the public, the town of Leeds would be held more lucrative and respectable in the opinion of players than I then seemed to apprehend.

The generous and friendly Mr. Barstow (then Town-Clerk of Leeds) of truly respectable memory, had a hand as open as day, as likewise Mrs. Barstow, his first wife, who I can really aver was sincere and friendly to Mrs. Wilkinson, me, and mine: Indeed Mr. Barstow's house ever had the hinges ready to fly and open the friendly doors to let me in, even at any hour; and my hours (unless to a Londoner) were then as now, very strange: and notwithstanding it is an evil habit, yet

to me it is luxurious, even though assured without a lecturer, that the practice hurts my health, which is not as a lusty winter. My wine is often rebellious; by the bye the reader must understand I am not by any means a drunken man, but from accident (almost now and then unavoidable) I live more freely than my stomach and health would permit, were strict prudence the guide. Indeed I by no means dislike the chimney-corner of life, particularly where that corner affords me every necessary. There was a gentleman, *at that time*, whom I likewise esteemed as a great support to the Leeds Theatre; I *now* return him thanks for his former kindnesses.

But to proceed—Be it known to all men, that after the first four weeks at Leeds, York races demanded attention; where of course, with bag and baggage, we all repaired: A very successful week ensued; I had a brave fought field, all well accoutred, all well furnished, all in arms, and victory was the word without the aid of foreign troops: For that experiment had never at that time been practiced, except the Mr. Woodward and Mr. Weston as before mentioned in the spring preceding at York. We struck our tents after our successful York campaign, and marched full of vigour and valour once more to Leeds, where, flushed with conquest from a tolerably

promising campaign at the beginning, we prepared for further conquest; for the success at York had neither satiated me nor my troops; they came to Leeds not only on command and duty, but to pillage and lay the good inhabitants under contribution for their benefits: But in that point we were egregiously mistaken, for there did not appear any open arms to receive us, nor did the numerous host of that good town relish our return; and what was worse they would not comply with our levying of taxes that autumn, so as to purchase provender for our winter support, but left us to the mercies of a rainy season, as the following facts will shew. I judged it prudent when we attacked for benefits at Leeds, to begin with an old veteran, Mr. Robertson, for the onset, as well known in Yorkshire *then*, as a Munden or a Fawcett is in London *now*; not doubting but such a well-founded favourite would lead the van with triumph: Indeed neither he nor any of the troop entertained the least doubt as to his success; but fatal to tell, the high hung banner and recorded gold, with all our loud applause, did quick to ruin fall and blast our hopes: For lo! *fifteen pounds* was the receipt of Robertson's play: That direful omen shook not only the prowess of my army, whose benefits were all depending, but made me quake and feel humble: Not that the bad success of a Theatre ever much affected my

Philosophy, for I never knew a bad house disconcert my spirits, nor a good one raise them. The remark is not mine, but the observation of the whole company of comedians under my kind fostering guardianship; and the reason is, when I perceive a bad house or houses, I hope for a change, the same as when tired with rain, heat, or any other severe or disagreeable weather; as it is ridiculous for an individual to plague himself, even though a farmer, as the round of the year's produce is to prove the famine, the devastation, or the smiling plentiful harvest. But to the actor who has but one night in a theatric season, and his family (perhaps his finances) trembling, it is of more serious consequence than many of the public are aware. As to myself, if the sum total of the year produces a tolerable granary for the supply of homely board, I have all the sing-song of a Frenchman; and though lame, can amuse myself with an opera-dance, and by the help of wit, wine, music, poetry, and each perfection, all combined by my heated imagination, make myself the Lord Ogleby at half-past twelve o'clock in a cloudy morning. So of writers, one is good, another is bad, another is execrable, but it is universally remarked, that every writer, good, bad, or indifferent, has a peculiar style. Now on that excellence I value myself: For my dear reader, whether of cross or

ill-natured disposition, do for once forgive, look in your mind's eye and laugh at me, and candidly own you do allow me an original; and surely that small boon every one will grant without my petitioning, and also that the style is entirely my own, and will not be pilfered from me by any writer whatever. But in this rhapsody I think it proper to declare, that I write it merely as an amusement, and not with the least expectation of amassing treasure, even in French Assignats: consequently I pay and keep myself warm with self-compliments, else I should freeze. Indeed I fear now and then I repeat in several places the same observations, but it is the hurry of a wild incoherent imagination. However as an egotism may be here introduced without the violation of propriety, I will just intrude upon the reader a little anecdote which occurs at present to my recollection.—The winter Lord Percy (the now Duke of Northumberland) was at York, he sent his compliments, desiring to speak with me, relative to the patronizing a night; when on my visit, and talking of different plays, I was standing at the window with his Lordship—"Well, and what then, Wilkinson?" says the reader. Why then I raised my delicate hand accidentally to my chin, the which hand my conceit had *intentionally* decorated with a handsome diamond ring, and a

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handsome one I perceived it was, for it caught Lord Percy's attention—he looked, gazed, and smiled inwardly a second time; I felt vexed and piqued, as if I was accused in his Lordship's mind's eye of foppery: However, the chit chat being finished I retired, and accoutred my hand with a leather glove: When I arrived at home, dinner was on the table—I said to Mrs. Wilkin-son, “Lord Percy is very elegant and pleasant in his behaviour, but I fear he thinks me an entire coxcomb, or he must have judged my ring as attractive as Lissardo's; for he looked at it very attentively:”—saying this, I pulled off my glove, when lo! on viewing my graceful hand, to my astonishment, a large vulgar *foil-ring*, the purchase of *eight shillings* thirty years ago in Westminster-hall, from out an old weather-beaten glass-case, appeared to my view, which I had by *mistake* put on. I was no longer surprised at the notice my Nabob's *stage-ring* had occasioned; for of course his Lordship must have wondered at my egregious stupidity, exceeding my vanity, when I put on such trumpery to appear as a gentleman before his Lordship. If I had “looked before I had leaped,” the whimsical disgrace could not have happened.

I here perceive that I have made a long stride with my lame leg, or if you please a hop, step, and jump, and left all my actors, my ladies and

gentlemen at Leeds in the greatest distress, relative to their several dependencies as to their benefits. Indeed the theme was not the most agreeable, and therefore I took a few minutes to be agreeable with myself; but now I am got back again, and am really sorry to relate, that Mr. Robertson's 15l. house which we all attributed to the fault of the poor battered play of Romeo and Juliet, living in hopes that warmer days would come;—yet all our golden dreams were frustrated; for 10l. 11l. 12l. and 14l. benefits, three or four excepted, lasted to the end of that Leeds chapter, 1771. I gave up all hopes, and will leave the ill or good success of that theatre, as we always leave the hero of the play in the third or fourth act; where, without the assistance of a drawn dagger or a poisoned bowl, it will be found difficult to extricate him. For there I think, as Dryden in some one of his prefaces expresses it, *lies the difficulty*, as death is ever at hand on or off the stage. But to save is more difficult than to destroy; so says the creed of all thinking mankind.

I cannot forbear remarking, before I break up my camp at Leeds and march for winter quarters, that we were much preached and writ against, by able performers in their way; which to me, on retrospection, was a matter of surprise, for I should have expected the contrary effect. In my

opinion it is truly ridiculous in either party, players or methodists, to retort or quarrel: for a player's holding up his supposed enemy to ridicule, will only make his venom the stronger; and the player's antagonist, for all his meekness and humility, will, cur-like, bite the player if he can; and every whelpish disposition can do some mischief, though not so much as they may be inclined to: Blessed be God it proves so for the good of all sects and opinions. Therefore a preacher attempting to frighten his hearers with *pitch-forks* and a *good roasting*, &c. answers no kind of purpose; as the true methodist has no sort of occasion for such a remonstrance—he sees and feels all the hell of a playhouse from sensation, without its being pointed out, or ever entering on such dangerous ground, where surely his purity would save him; but he, with great composure, without asking his Maker's leave, or indeed without any leave at all, commits the actors, audience, and all into the *bottomless* pit.—To those who like a play, (sanctioned by a good King, Lords, and Commons,) the rigor and vehemence of invective only gives twice the inclination to go—So, as Lady Townly says, “All this mending and mending, is only just like darning an old ruffle to “make it worse than it was before.” For instance, a Mr. Nicholas Manners of Hull, did

me the honour to write and publish what he judged a severe letter to me, on my Memoirs, thinking, I suppose, to mortify. But in that *kind intention* he was most egregiously mistaken; for addressing a letter to me, as an author, was a compliment I never expected: So, instead of wounding, it was a circumstance of triumph to my pride, and made me think for that time, I was really an author, a *somebody*, by such an *unexpected* rap at my door. Indeed I liked the pamphlet so well, that I had it immediately bound up with my book, as a mark of self-honour when I am departed hence.

I really think my Whitfield and Wesley bore several marks of character, and was as strong an impression of good *characteristic* imitation, take it all together, as has been given in print of those two gentlemen. Not that I ever held Mr. Whitfield or Mr. Wesley in disesteem, *quite the contrary*: Nor do I hold methodists in any disrespect because they do not like to see plays: It is true that I think they are rather uncharitable, yet I believe there are worthy people amongst them, and should be glad if many who go to a play were as praise-worthy. Quakers seldom go to plays, but I can safely vow and declare I rarely see a Quaker of either sex, but the appearance creates in me true respect; their neatness and apparent goodness seems to command it, and I wish to doff my

hat I know not why :—A compliment and a foolish ceremony that a Quaker would smile at, and willingly excuse such trifling. I have met with some great compliments in Voltaire to the Quakers, I believe in his Huguenot. He, with all his great genius, wit, and understanding was not very moral, but a little of the reprobate ; yet he could not resist a compliment as due to the religion, the purity, and the manners of Quakers. There is a gentleman of the church, I should have had reason to make complaint against, but that his foaming at the mouth, and being over earnest, has created me friends, and himself the contrary ; which will ever be the case with over-burning zeal. I could have been warranted had I even complained to the Archbishop of York for redress : Perhaps accident may occasion this book being honoured with a perusal at the Archbishop's palace, and this page may be then read ; if so, what must his Grace think of a Mr. Garwood, (I believe that is the GENTLEMAN's name) of the Low-Church at Hull, in January 1792, daring to pronounce, that " No player or any of his children " ought to be entitled to a Christian burial, or even " to lie in a church-yard ! " that " *Not* one could " be saved ! " and that " Every one who entered a " playhouse was, with the players, equally certain of *eternal* damnation ! " and that " No " PLAYER COULD BE AN HONEST MAN." I should

truly be angry with myself if when I saw Dr. Hey of Leeds, I did not admire his good works as a Christian; esteem him for his ingenuous and praise-worthy actions, and for the many undoubted proofs he has given and daily gives as a man of learning and science in his profession as a physician. This cannot be flattery, for I have not any acquaintance with him, or am I likely in our different walks, ever to have such an honour; but I take this opportunity to pay myself a compliment, and a great one, in publicly declaring, I bow to the worth and talents of Dr. Hey, and am sensible of his merits; and though that gentleman can employ his time in doing universal good, yet he does *not go to plays*.

Doth not evil enter the doors of a tabernacle, church, or palace, as well as a playhouse? Verily yea!—Be quiet, I know it,—I have often been there. As the Archbishop of York is as remarkable for his goodness and benevolence as he is a judge also of justice and good will for the benefit of mankind, I rest assured that his Grace will not think virulence and spleen a credit to such a pastor of his flock, as it makes him a disgrace to the pulpit and the gown.

“Pious Orgies,” “Angels bright as fair,” and “Father of Heaven,” &c. are equal to all the hymns of a sequestered tabernacle, and truly elevate the soul. Mr. Whitfield said, when Love in

Village, and the Maid of the Mill were the rage of that time—"Why should the devil's house have all the good tunes?" Since which it has been customary for their songs and full chorusses to be assisted from the light easy tunes selected from our favourite stage operas. A Methodist, *if a printer**, would not, I dare say, have the least objection to print play-bills for the devil's house!—I have now before me a very blasphemous bill, called "The Affize-week," but think it too wicked for my book.

"Fools to one party only should confide,

"For if one fails they're feed on the other side."

Immediate notice of Mr. Garwood would have been too great a compliment. Indeed I think my being patentee of a theatre, established by the Lords and Commons, and an entertainment in London, attended by the best of men and Kings, and in fact authorised by our reverend Bishops in Parliament, might have curbed such licentious behaviour, under the specious cover of a servant to his God. I say again, had I felt mortified and taken proper notice of Mr. Garwood, he would have cut but an awkward figure, if accused as a calumniator, and an injurer of me, my family,

* Be it remarked that Mr. Wilkinson, in 1771, had a printer who was a rigid Methodist; but as he made no return, Mr. Wilkinson did not continue him in that business.

and the comedians in our lawful established profession. That the stage has its errors, cannot be denied—Pray, what is exempt?

I should not have mentioned the above circumstance so long before its time and place, as indeed I have no business with religious opinions on any account—truly it becomes me not: I beg leave therefore to assure all *good* Methodists, that I hold them in great respect; and if they will pray for me in earnest, I will accept and thank them for their prayers; but not meaning to enter again on a subject which I acknowledge improper, I could not resist this opportunity of bringing Mr. Garwood into *good* company where he is not, that I might pay him my thankful compliments and have done with him. I have here had my turn—I forgive him freely—of that he may rest assured; and if he is a good man, I think he must feel compunction, and favour me with absolution,—but that I much doubt, as he was the intended injurer—here, Sir,

“ ————learn the difference ’twixt my faith and
“ thine:

“ Thine bids thee lift the dagger to my throat;

“ Mine can forgive the wrong, and bid thee live!”

And that remark, Mr. Garwood, you may find in a *play*—So farewell to the little good you bear me—Farewel, thou little, good, great preacher—But

to good preachers of every denomination permit me to observe, that whenever a furious, self-created fanatic suffers his zeal to run so far out of course, as to permit religion to lose its purity, the preacher, by such procedure, to a certainty lessens to our view, and he wantonly and vainly lowers the dignity and noble firm of the truly devout: My petition is, that others would deal as honestly and honourably by me, as I would do unto them. Would man in every degree of life, how great or how little, act truly up to that standard, there could not be found persons of bad principles either in Europe, Africa, America, or indeed throughout the world, and it would prove a better and more effectual regulation for the *entire abolition* of the Slave-Trade, than any one that has hitherto been proposed by Lords or Commons.— A woful day for preachers!

I here suddenly perceive that by my musings I have wandered most egregiously out of my road—perhaps the ill fortune at Leeds put me out of temper.—But let me see,—O aye! I was relating the bad success of my new Leeds Theatre, which continued not only that season, but for a course of years; now it is in a more respectable and flourishing state: However it underwent many fluctuations and changes of fortune ere it reached the age of maturity; so I will not give any more of its history

at the present, but from the first year of its entrance into the world will bring it gradually on with the *revolving sun* and the *revolving moon**, till I hand it to posterity with all its good and bad fortune on its back, and hope to catch the wonder of my reader when I relate all its fluctuations. From Leeds season, 1771, the latter end of October, we entered Hull for great part of our winter quarters. The company was much the same as I have attempted to describe, as was the success, and I do not recollect any particulars worthy notice—O yes! my pupil, DICK SUETT, came about the age of seventeen; he was known only from having sung one season at Renelagh. The ladies were mistaken in their notions—for he, like Garrick's Young Clacket, had then, and still retains a most unpromising pair of legs: He made his first appearance at Hull Theatre, on Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1771, and sung with approbation the song of "Chloe's my Myrtle and Jenny's my Rose;"—But as he was of real importance to my little community before he left me, I will for the present lay my bud of myrtle *on the shelf*—a situation not much liked by us of the theatrical garden: However there let Suett lie till summer's ripening breath, from merit, assiduity, and genius render him, if not an *American aloe*, in truth a theatrical *well-blown flower*: When I come near

* See Mr. Sheridan's Critic.

the present time and examine the tree, I shall find it rooted in good qualities, and bearing ripened fruit, in the honourable and only true theatrical botanical garden, the London Theatre; yet London criticisms are not always perfect: For instance, praising Miss Brunton's performance of Alicia, when that character was acted by another person the day she was praised; such has happened repeatedly within my time; and proves it a kind of trade, not sound judgment. For to praise what *did not happen*, though it might *have happened*, certainly is going to the height of partiality. I must allow that many actors are favourites in tragedy and comedy who act in the country, and who, from applause, get worse instead of better; as they too frequently grasp the shadow instead of the substance, by which means they dangerously please themselves—and their partial friends applauding their faults, is the cause of fatal errors being established, instead of improved judgment; leaving taste, sense, and feeling, for bombast; tearing of the lungs to rags and tatters, leaving real powers to lag behind; and all this happens with too many, who would otherwise bid fair for solid reputation.

There is one superiority which the Bath and Yorkshire Theatres can boast, which is not having interludes, &c. between the acts. Some of the London bills exhibit such variety as should only

be tolerated at the Wells, the Circus, or at Astley's. At those places their bills of fare are calculated for proper hours for the company to be dismissed, leaving an appetite for the audience to make a meal some other time—which is worthy consideration. But really at the established Theatres it is sometimes unpardonable and disgraceful, and must be attended with great inconvenience to all sober families to have their servants out till past twelve o'clock at a playhouse. This certainly should be remedied. At Dublin I believe it is still worse—indeed it must be so—for the play in general does not begin till seven, and often *much* later. I read a bill from Dublin, for April 1791, which consisted of *Percy*. End of the *third act*, in the middle of the *Tragedy*, “Imitations of Jane Shore, Calista, Belvidera, Lady Townly, &c.”—Oh shame! shame! Then “an Epilogue”—then “The Maid of the Oaks”—and *after all this*, “the Burletta of Tom Thumb”.

But these observations may be only termed impertinent by my brethren; and to dictate about reform may be judged supercilious, and is not my province. I know however it is a proper time to reform myself—Better late than never——But where was I?—Oh! I had just left Mr. Suett on the shelf at Hull in November 1771:—The troop was the same as those before mentioned, no addition, except a Signor LE NAMORA, Miss LE

NAMORA, Signora SAMANZATI, and others from Sadlers' Wells: They were clever in their way, drew money, were well behaved, and all parties were satisfied;—the season was good, the public pleased, and we retired in good order for the remainder of the winter, and opened at York, in January 1772, in good health and spirits. Our tragedy queen, Mrs. King, who led the van, and grew into great fame and fashion, was spoke of by several persons of distinction as promising rapidly to be one of the first London actresses; but they judged it more prudent if she would fix for a season or two longer at York, in order to be more matured for her London onset, where her success was not then doubted. Oh! fortune! fortune! wherefore art thou fickle?—This flattery and applause was, no doubt, greatly relished by Mrs. King, who began to conceive she had hitherto been blind to her own merit and consequence, and it was now high time to grow discontented and unhappy: This *happy* turn of mind for the possessor was soon put in practice, and her inquietude, which was confirmed and greatly increased from the following proposal to please and make her contented, brought her fever to its height of vanity—and self-love and self-admiration made her completely miserable: The cause was briefly thus:—The late Sir William Anderson, a gentleman of great benevolence,

waited on me at my house in York, with several other gentlemen, who unitedly said they were deputed by many others to return me thanks for the almost superfluous spirit with which I had kept up and extended the theatrical entertainments at York; they at the same time begged to assure me, they were so convinced of the truth of their testimony, that they could not think of urging me to any further expence, but as they universally wished the longer continuance of their favourite actress, Mrs. King, and judged it more prudent for her not to rush unadvisedly to London, they meant, without infringing on my purse, to present her with a free gift of fifty guineas per ann. for three years, and support her benefit that and each following year, and hoped I would not object to her having a second benefit also as a *douceur*, that Mrs. King might be convinced the leading people of York were in earnest in the wishing to promote her interest; in return for the compliment, they expected her continuance; and they added that no doubt could be made but at Hull something similar would be set on foot, to prove the audience of that populous town was equally sensible of her merits.

This all appeared to me as highly flattering to our heroine, and seemed to insure her stay, with which I was highly pleased, as she and Mr. King were to be depended on as to propriety and

strictness to their engagements. Not that they were so unlike other players as not to plague me whenever they judged it necessary, *tout a contraire*; for it is as natural to like vexing the manager, as it is to think themselves always in the right. Indeed we are often all in the wrong; and if we plagued one another less, it would be better for all parties before and behind the curtain; but we too often are all *unhappy* together.

The reader will here suppose that the said offer to a certainty secured Mr. and Mrs. King, particularly when I intimate that they were paid my first salaries, fifty-four weeks in the year, that is double for three public race-weeks; and had three benefits, one at York, one at Hull, and the third at Leeds, besides she had the lead in all the first-rate characters in both the departments of tragedy and comedy; but good reader no such thing: For though she was something like the semblance of being contented before this offer was presented, yet, on hearing the proposal, she was convinced her situation was wretched!—she was miserable!—losing her time!—her prime of days, youth, beauty, and elegance, would be lost unless such perfection burst immediately on the great world. She accepted the second benefit indeed, but as Mrs. Barry had left Dublin with Mr. Barry for Drury-Lane Theatre in London, she thought *that* the time to supply the vacant

chair against the next Rosciad was wrote; to Ireland she would go forthwith, and was so determined, that I found it impossible to attempt or think of keeping her by any means; I therefore gave over all sollicitation or overtures whatever, and even undertook to be her negotiator with the Dublin managers, as I was engaged that spring by my old acquaintance, Mr. Dowson, then the manager of Crow-street, for a few nights; and she left Yorkshire to open the ensuing campaign in Ireland, in October 1772; there I will leave Mrs. King for the present, preparing for shouts of applause, great benefits, and golden tickets in showers. Well, let her rest till the time comes in due course of this journal.

Before I close the York season, and take the road for Holy-Head, I must recollect I engaged the remains of an actress, once well known in the theatrical world, whose name was SWEENEY, but better known by the name of BLAND and HAMILTON: Her first husband's name was Bland, who was of some very inferior order of Covent-Garden Theatre. I recollect, so long ago as 1747, her acting in the character of the maid-servant in Tunbridge Walks; from thence she went over to Ireland, and though very ignorant, yet by the help of a good retention, and strong and unremitting application, made such rapid improvement, that she ripened as an actress in spite

of Nature : For so unexpectedly and wonderfully did she insinuate herself in public estimation, that Mr. Sheridan judged it almost needless to think of Mrs. Woffington in the autumn 1751. However the charming Peggy Woffington was engaged that year*, and attracted most astonishingly by the same repeated characters for three successive winters.

Mrs. Bland was then a widow, and played Hermione to Mrs. Woffington's Andromache,—Lady Lurewell to her Wildair, &c. ; but when seen together, like the comet and the falling star, it was impossible for the audience not instantly to perceive the difference between the brilliancy of a true diamond and that of a mere Bristol stone—like my *diamond ring*!—So of course Woffy was deservedly the great magnet, and Mrs. Bland was consequently greatly dissatisfied, and in September 1752 left Ireland disgusted, and was received once more by Mr. Rich at Covent-Garden Theatre. Her person was rather of the *en bonne point*, but tall, and a good set of features, but by no means elegant : She possessed what was all sublime and precious to Mr. Rich, a fine head of jetty black flowing locks. That commander in chief did not like powder, but wished a prohibitory act to that article of effeminate luxury, unless perchance his favourite fair turned grey : So in compliance to her general's taste, she seldom or

* See Victor's Account.

ever wore powder. It was as strange to the full at that time, as it would be now, to see Lady Townly in a full suit, fit for the Court at St. James's, yet without powder;—and I believe the compliance was a two-fold gratification, for she was as fond of this her *black joke*, as was her good master the manager. Mr. Rich had another whim, the rather unaccountable, as he was himself remarkably short in stature, yet he had such an insurmountable objection to a five-foot actor, that had he beheld the imaginary merits of a Jupiter, Apollo, and Achilles, all combined and not six foot high, he would have thought of Garrick, and dismissed him his stage; so fixed an aversion, contempt, and enmity had he to Garrick.

Mrs. Bland acted that season, 1752, Jane Shore and Hermione, to Mrs. Cibber's Alicia, and Andromache; Lady Townly to Mr. Barry's Lord Townly: In short, she was the second actress of consequence to Mrs. Cibber, and in point of quantity she was, or might have been termed the cart-horse of the mill, and Mrs. Cibber the high mettled racer, and the true blooded mare.

A circumstance happened in February 1753, which tended greatly to her establishment: The absence of Woffington had been one lucky point, and the play of *Effex*, wrote by Jones, still much more so; Queen Bess and her beef-steaks for breakfast, though well known, from tradition, to

my Lord and to my Lady, to John and Sue, to Darby and Joan, yet on the stage that great personage had been almost forgot; for Bankes's plays of *The Earl of Effex* and *The Albion Queens*, or *Mary Queen of Scots* were almost obsolete from the jumble of rhyme and extravagance which they contained, from being well imagined, like those in the time of Dryden and Lee,—and the play of *Mary Queen of Scots*, much assisted from the undoubted authenticity of Wilkes's good acting—yet, from the late 50 years disuse of bombast and fiery flights of fancy, the natural consequence was, our *Stage Queen Elizabeth* had not been in repute or well attended from the days of the celebrated Mrs. Porter: Therefore when Jones, the Irish bricklayer, produced his easy and flowing short play, founded on the Story of Effex, in February 1753, it met with great success, and that not matter of surprise to those who can console themselves with recollecting its first representation. Mrs. Bland, luckily for her, personified the said Queen; the play was new dressed: And when Mr. Rich arrayed a play, there are few, very few dresses I may venture to say of modern times, equal to the intrinsic worth, such as good velvet, &c.;—and real lace was necessary to make their stage habiliments truly so. Barry's inimitable acting of Effex, Mrs. Cibber's Rutland, with an excellent Epilogue, written by Mr. Garrick, gave

the said play a run of sixteen nights that season, with great relish. Mrs. Bland playing the character of Queen Elizabeth in that piece, for such a number of nights, with great reputation and applause, confirmed her as an actress in the eye of the public: An instance how chance makes and mars the chain of life's events. The year following she became Mrs. Hamilton, which was the year Shuter left Drury-Lane for Covent-Garden; and from being allowed tolerable there, the said *Master Shouter*, as the gallery called him, became suddenly the star, the wonder, the idol of the public. Strange to relate, but true, that the degree of estimation should be so materially different, merely occasioned by the crossing over from Russel-street, Drury-Lane, to Bow-street, Covent-Garden—but all is wonder. This lady before-mentioned, Mrs. Hamilton, seemed to sail before the wind: It is true Mrs. Bellamy returned from Drury-Lane that year, and Miss Nossiter made her appearance; but all the material weight depended on Mrs. Hamilton—She was the Berinthia, the Millamant, the Portia, and the Sylvia—in short, the leading actresses in three plays out of four: She did not pride herself on her friends of quality, but paid court to many citizens, who looked on her as an honest woman. She received and returned visits in form, had a house in York Buildings, kept her chair, and was rising in reputation and affluence; she had a turn for

œconomy, and was saving money fast ; her salary was increasing, and her benefits popular and well attended. In the year 1754, her rival, Mrs. Woffington, piqued at the treatment she received on the remarkable Dublin riot, (as mentioned by Mr. Victor, Mr. Hitchcock, and others) left the sister kingdom, and was engaged at Covent-Garden Theatre ; but notwithstanding the novelty and acknowledged beauty and merit of Woffington, Hamilton being familiarised to the audience, (a great point, and much more than the most rigid critic is aware of, either in town or country,) as use prevents the foibles being so glaring, and in fact thus are partly overlooked and forgot—Ryan's voice is an instance—others might be named,—yet by Mrs. Hamilton's constant acquaintance with the public, she stood her ground ; and her black locks, unpowdered or puffed, and skin more brown than white, secured the heart of her manager : Not but she was obliged to submit to the relinquishing Lady Townly, Portia, and several principal characters, and though her murmurs were not vented in public, (for Queen Woffington held her in the most sovereign contempt) yet Mrs. Hamilton hated her opponent Margaret ; and could we have supposed the two rival queens to have had a pitched battle, the Lord have mercy upon poor Woffy, for Hamilton would have plunged her dagger,

and hurled her devoted victim to the avenging gods—nor would Bellamy have obtained much mercy from her ireful spirit. Notwithstanding all this, where her fame of acting was not concerned, she was far from wanting good nature; but originally illiterate and vulgar, the Green-Room had not polished her manners: It had been better for herself (as the sequel will prove) had she been more courtly, and spoke and looked sometimes more foreign to the heart.

In the year 1755-6, these ladies were all continued at Covent-Garden Theatre, with the addition of Miss Nossiter, who had been the year before with Mr. Barry in Ireland, where he had supplied the loss of Mr. Sheridan as manager, who had left Dublin on account of the late mentioned riot, and acted that winter at Covent-Garden Theatre; therefore Hamilton laboured and tugged at the oar, and fretted and fumed, and tugged again—she kept her ground, and her benefits improved; but still she was not sole Empress, or the first in command, and, like Lucy in the Beggar's Opera, "That Peg Woffington run in her head strangely."

In the winter 1756 and spring 1757, matters continued much the same; Woffington grew very languid,—and except her Frenchified lady, (in a very bad farce) where she was inimitable, all her characters lost attraction.

In the month of May that spring, the sudden and fatal attack upon the health of Mrs. Woffington, which I have taken the liberty particularly to relate in my Memoirs, was a fortunate event to the impatient Hamilton. I never shall forget the awful circumstance which deprived us of real beauty, an accomplished woman, and a charming actress, particularly in coquets, &c. As the common adage is, that "It is an ill wind that blows no body good," so it may be said, and I believe with truth, there seldom is a death without its being a robbery or an advantage to somebody. The heir who comes into possession of a great estate, can get the better of his feelings by degrees, and views his grounds with a superior felicity to that of the month before, when he looked on possession as far distant:—Every child and parent should remember a father's loveliest name is *friend*. I am led to believe there are very few deaths in any department, without some pilfering; and here it came to pass with Mrs. Hamilton, who on the retirement of her opponent, Mrs. Woffington, not only expected promotion, but the attractive attendant with advancement,—more emolument with new honours. This was the case the ensuing season, which she achieved from Mr. Rich; and on she went with an article of yearly increasing salary for a length of time. But in the year 1760, unhappily her old

friend and manager, Mr. Rich, departed this life, and Mr. Beard became joint manager with the widow and Mr. Bencraft. Mr. Beard had married Mrs. Lane, a daughter of Mr. Rich, and Mr. Bencraft had married another daughter.—New brooms sweep clean, and these new directors determined on many alterations in their theatrical government. Mrs. Hamilton stood, as she thought, secure, and often let her new masters know who she was, indeed too often in terms of such vulgar asperity as made them disgusted with her. They knew she was engaged for some years to come, and they must in consequence make the best of their bargain till the happy time for release should arrive. In the spring 1763, the play of "The Lady's Last Stake" was to be revived, when the managers allotted this proud Dame Hamilton the character of Lady Wronglove: She was enraged at not having her choice of character, for though growing into the vale of life, yet she had fixed determinately on the gay Mrs. Conquest, which was allotted to Miss Macklin. The dispute between Mr. Beard and her grew violent, he threatened to forfeit her 20l. if she did not comply; she in return vaunted, in her own natural elegance,—that "set a beggar "on horse-back and he would ride to the devil." Thus bursting with ambition, she could by no means relish the tamely submitting to her new

created masters, the Esquires and Patentees. Bencraft had ever been entertained in a subordinate situation in the Theatre, and was only tolerable in Mr. Rich's pantaloons in his harlequinades: Therefore she aspired (like Mr. Thomas Paine) at being a *leveller* of their distinctions and usurped authority, and judged with the poet——

—————“ That as a horse,
“ Is still a horse, for all his golden trappings;
“ So your men of purchased titles, at their best, are
“ But serving men in rich liveries.”

Thus opinioned, she would not permit soothing, the administering or the receiving reason, persuasion, or palliation,—nothing but war, war, war, without thinking of events, probable or improbable;—and unfortunately in answer to the said declaration, Mr. Beard still persisted on her performing Lady Wronglove, and the Lady in return fired and menaced destruction, and from placing too much dependence on her own skill and ideal prowess, she very unwarily pronounced a secret—aye indeed, a fatal secret! for she assured Mr. Beard, though her article was for some years to come, yet if they presumed to offend her, she would leave the company at the expiration of that season: For she knew the support she was to that theatre, and in consequence

she had made a secret clause in her article with the late Mr. Rich, by which the agreement did not continue in force with any future manager or managers. This intelligence, instead of meeting the desired and intended effect, had quite contrary consequences; for the knit angry brow and eye of terror, changed instantly to features the most placid, smiling, and pleasing. He bowed and returned thanks for the unexpected and truly welcome intelligence, and assured the lady that the article should be cancelled the next day, and she was welcome at the end of May to depart to where her fancy pleased best. And in this foolish unthinking conduct she may have been said to fail, and bring on her own destruction. She naturally must have felt chagrined at being treated so cavalierly: However, drawing vanity and self-consequence to her aid, she kept up her hauteur to the managers to the end of the season, inwardly assuring herself, that by the approach of the ensuing winter, repentance and submission, with increased liberality of terms, would be offered, and she would then forgive the managers, and be more cautious in future. Plumed with the certainty of these pleasing reflections, she left her husband, Mr. Hamilton, on a plan of his, for opening a tea-shop in some advantageous part of the town, and went on a summer theatrical excursion, as the leading lady, expecting daily to

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be called for. During her rural residence from the Metropolis her husband died. I believe from many circumstances he had not treated her well; but of that matter I know not but by hearsay;—and if my reader has been long acquainted with this beehive, the world, he or she must know how fallacious, as well as mischievous, Mr. Hearsay is every week, day, and hour. But she, bedewed in tears and bedecked in weeds, and wishing, like Lady Brumpton, for some favourite Nutbrain to view her, and on the view adore, thus befurbelowed, in the month of September, returned to London. She had I believe, accumulated full two thousand pounds; this she had intrusted entirely to the care of her husband. Now she being utterly unacquainted with matters of business in the commercial line, expected that gold was on the surface, and more at the bottom—but alack-a-day, to her astonishment, when she came to view her late husband's effects, and inquire at the bank after her riches, he had drawn out and expended every shilling. Thus was she left, her black hairs growing grey; and she might be looked on, when that surprise happened, like Niobe, all tears—and was most truly wretched and forlorn:—Poverty seized fast hold, and led her slowly to a home of horror, where she had indeed some theatrical property and stage clothes of value, also some good furniture and

china. She now consulted, for the first time, prudence, which suggested immediate application to her offended managers, not doubting but her losses, affliction, and submission, with her own imagined infinite merit thrown into the scale, would certainly restore her to her happy and lucrative situation, the which she had in spleen and arrogance so unwittingly given up. She followed the good instigation, and elated with assurance of success and welcome reception, she lost no time, but in her sables presented herself like Andromache to the princely Pyrrhus, and quoted—

“Behold how low you have reduced a queen—”

“When Priam kneel’d the great Achilles wept.”

But Mr. Beard felt not the tenderness like that mighty King. Anger and fixed dislike had taken deep root in the breast of the late insulted manager: The widow only received taunts and reproaches for her ingratitude and ill behaviour, and was bid suddenly to depart the Royal Covent-Garden Palace, never to enter the doors again as a performer;—and that prohibition was verified: For as it corresponded with the manager’s wish, he was capable, like other mortal men, of persevering in his resolution; and though it originated from her own foolish conduct, yet error has been and will be the lot of much wiser

heads than that unfortunate heroine possessed: She suddenly found herself thrown from a situation full of prospect. As to Drury-Lane Theatre, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Yates, and Mrs. Clive precluded every chance of engagement there; a circumstance she should particularly have attended to:—For so it happens, that principal performers at that time and now, might quit their quarters and be gladly received on the other side of the way, or on the other side of the water, at Dublin; but time and chance are wonderful deceivers. Mr. Barry, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Yates, Mr. Woodward, and others often changed sides and opinions like their superiors, but were not always right. Thus circumstanced she had no resource but to offer her services in Ireland to Mr. Mossop, who remembering the fame she had supported seventeen years before in Dublin, and the capital situation she had kept from that time in Covent-Garden, thought her an object worthy his consideration, which occasioned his offering a handsome salary; which she, as matters stood, gladly accepted after her sudden sinkings, her risings, and her fallings; at the same time she entertained hopes of great success from her former good reception in Dublin, and doubted not but the same good fortune would naturally follow on her present emergency. But Dublin was in a very different state as to theatrical entertain-

ments. At that period the town was wearied out with the various benefits, and parties occasioned by the rivalry between the two theatres, under the different directions of Barry and Mossop—for though Woodward was gone, and had returned to London, as the prodigal, that autumn, yet Barry, with the assistance of Sheridan, &c. was not only stronger, but maintained a great superiority. Neither house was regular in their payments, but Barry's much the best in 1763-4.

Mrs. Hamilton was, on her first appearance in Dublin, ill received, and then much disliked. "Her way of life was fallen into the fear, the yellow leaf; and she had lost her troop of friends"—She who had made so shining a figure in the theatrical annals, was now only that winter, permitted to play an inferior cast, and not tolerated in any character but Mrs. Peachum in *The Beggar's Opera*, which was Mossop's best card, owing to Miss Catley being engaged for her first season in Dublin; and Father Time had formed wrinkles on the face, in place of the former dimples and bewitching smiles—that said hard-hearted old dog, Time, had also ripened and brought to perfection in Ireland, in the interim, the youth of that day, Mrs. Dancer, (late Mrs. Barry, now Mrs. Crawford) also Mrs. Abington and Mrs. Fitzhenry, who held the public in chains of admiration. The two former are only now living

(perhaps like Mrs. Hamilton) to witness the change of scene from the fire of youth to the meditation and slow pensive step that leads to eternity. Each of the ladies mentioned, I believe are happily secure of every necessary affluence this world requires; and I wish their remaining days or years may be attended with health and happiness. Mrs. Fitzhenry died in 1791, and in very good circumstances.

Mrs. Hamilton (whose history I have not yet finished) failing as to attraction, got, I conjecture, but ill paid that winter by Mossop; and as her time of life as well as her finances would not with any degree of prudence permit her to be idle, she engaged for the summer season in some country company in Ireland, unknowing what her fate was to be in the winter. This must have occasioned bitter reflections, and what was worse, the keenness of the anguish only probed her wounded mind to make it worse; for London and Dublin stages offered no prospect for future reception, nor likelihood of a comfortable asylum to give refuge for her winter days, which were fast approaching: Her ill star pursued her unremittingly; for so it fell out, that her cross fate seated her in the stage-coach (which was to convey her to a country troop of comedians at Kilkenny) with a swaggering Captain as a fellow passenger. She talked of her acting, her

prudence, œconomy, and fortune;—the Captain blustered of his drums, his guns, his wounds, and what was more pleasing to this almost superannuated widow, he talked of love: He pressed, she sighed—He was strong and violent;—she capitulated; but it was, be it chaste observed, on honourable terms: She had long determined to be happy on such conditions, provided a husband was to be *had in the parish*.

“For in a modest way the dame

“Was a great lover of that same.”

If such were her private resolutions, what a happy woman to obtain a strong young Irishman of twenty-five; and again how happy the swain, to gain a buxom widow, with plate, jewels, and the idea of riches that would make a fortune at the gaming table. I cannot help thinking they sung at their nuptials Kelly and Crouch's duet,

I.

Young Capt. O! thou wert born to please me,

Old Lady. My life, my only love.

Young Capt. Thro' all the world I'll praise thee,

Old Lady. My shepherd of the grove.

Young Capt. Thus happy—never

Old Lady. Jealous.

Young Capt. Thou art my only—

Old Lady. Love.

Young Capt. Can any harm

Old Lady. Assail us,

Young Capt. Dear idol of my

Old Lady. Heart.

Both. { Feel how my heart is beating,
 { My life, my only love.

II.

Old Lady. Thus love's sweet poison drinking,

Young Capt. My rural queen of love !

Old Lady. Thus on my bosom sinking,

Young Capt. My life, my only love !

Old Lady. Thus happy—never

Young Capt. Jealous.

Old Lady. Thou art my only—

Young Capt. Love !

Old Lady. Can any harm

Young Capt. Affail us,

Old Lady. My shepherd of the grove.

Both. { Thus love's sweet poison drinking,
 { My life, my only love. (*Embracing*)

In short it was bite the biter, or each biter bit: He expected riches and great benefits by marrying this famous actress; and the foolishly imagined he was possessed of the fortune he boasted—she longed to be once more an honest woman, united in the bands of holy wedlock, and to be a lady—aye, and a Captain's lady, who would cheer her

"With—How d'ye do?"

"And—How d'ye do?"

"And—How d'ye do again?"

But the hymeneal joys of wedlock soon converted all the sweets to the cup of bitter gall—

and, like Lady Townly, after dreaming of winning thousands, she waked without one shilling—and then how like a hag she looked ! For the day of wedlock with Mrs. Sweeny was, as might be expected, her *Road to Ruin*; and she might be truly called the *Mourning Bride*: For each day after the mutual deception was discovered, was to her a day of cares. Not but she would have been contented with her lot, lived on bread and water, and made her arm a pillow for her lord and husband's head, with the cold earth her resting-place, and her food the shepherd's alms; but though she could be pleased with her bargain, yet the youthful vigorous swain was by no means so easily contented. And she must have been stupidly vain to have ever supposed a happy union would or could take place so oppositely paired as to age. The noble Captain was only on half-pay, and therefore went with her from place to place, pawning and selling her remains of clothes, spoons, &c. as they travelled from one itinerant company to another. She tried an engagement at Edinburgh, but could not be retained a season; "her powers were blasted," as Romeo expresses; "and her teeth were gone before her to the bed of dust:" She was the despairing Tragic Muse, moving from place to place, like Thespis in a cart, and water was her drink, who had been used to live in a degree of splendor, and look down on little folks below her; and when accident fur-

prifingly produced a fhining guinea or the fplendid crown, her fwaggering mate gave her in return the ftrapado, and loft no time in fquandering the mighty fum at cards or billiards, and in his rage for his own ill-luck and bad conduct, he returned in the morning to vent reproaches, and give family difquiet to his *mob led queen*——As Suckling fays,

“ And while abroad fo prodigal the dolt is ;

“ Poor fpoufe at home, as ragged as a colt is.”

In this deplorable ftate, no wonder if fhe had giving herfelf a *quietus* from her fea of troubles, and made real death-like ufe of her tin tragedy-bowl and dagger, and relieved herfelf from a miferable exiftence, unlefs heavenly religion made her wave all fuch evil thoughts—Indeed fhe was of Shakspeare’s opinion—

“ We muft abide our going hence

“ Even as our coming hither.”

The following lines describe fuch a fituation moft beautifully and forcibly——He

“ That kills himfelf to avoid mifery, fears it ;

“ And, at the beft, fhews but a baftard valour.

“ This life’s a fort committed to our truft,

“ Which muft not be yielded up till forc’d,

“ Nor will I—he’s not valiant that dares die,

“ BUT HE THAT BOLDLY BEARS CALAMITY.”

About twenty-three years ago, after having bravely struggled through her various vicissitudes of woe, I saw her in a little company at Malton, in the character, of the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, in the year 1771, being in truth reduced to her *Love's last Shift*: Her tender leech of a husband luckily dropped from her, and left her to the care of her own contentment. However, being quit of her bad and foolish bargain, after having in vain made former pressing-solicitations, she judged that being a single woman, and not having the incumbrance of Mr. Sweeny, she might be taken into the York company, and end her days with decency, content, and happiness. For the scenes of distress she had experienced, with all the horrors of penury and hard usage, made such a situation as the York Theatre almost as enviable as her former state of stage grandeur. She also wrote, and pleaded her being kind to me when there was little hope or likelihood of my being her superior in life; which was a strict truth. She was also strongly backed in her petition by our mutual friends, Mr. and Mrs. Hull, who had ever been kind and good to her; in consequence she was, in January 1772, entertained in my list of ladies for the York season. She began with her established characters of *Queen Elizabeth* and *Lady Brumpton*, but her evil genius had not done

purfuing her, for a ludicrous circumftance occurred in Lady Brumpton, on her fecond night of performing, which to her was no joke, but truly mortifying, whatever it may be to the reader. She, by the good nature of the audience, (who being informed of her once eftablifhed fame, and pitying the various fcenes of diftreff ſhe had undergone) was much indulged, and they beftowed great marks of tendernefs on her performing the brave Queen Beffs; and, I dare imagine that ſhe experienced more happinefs and fleep that delightful evening, unknown for months and years on her bed of thorns, all damp with tears, rent from a heart of anguiſh and deſpair; but this unfortunately was only a gleam of fun-ſhine from a lowering ſky, for the next appearance ſhe made was in Lady Brumpton, and when giving an account to *Tattleaid*, of the envy and havoc ſhe would make on her firſt appearance in the ſide-boxes, after her widowhood on the death of Lord Brumpton, at the moment ſhe was making her conqueſts and enſlaving hearts, her upper and lower tier in front,—of yellow (not white) ivory—wearied with a long ſervice, gave way, as the real ones had done long before, and in the utmoſt confuſion ſhe retired; but they were paſt repair! and the unfortunate actreſs, full of tears and chagrin, mumbled through the remainder of the play, and retired to her cot, but not to taſte re-

pose, for the defect was so evident, that ever after her name was received with disgust in the play-bill, and the hospital recommended as the properest place for her reception.

When the public take an ill-natured turn, no persons suffer the lash more severely than players, for they look on them as their servants and lawful game; and as such think they have a greater privilege over performers than any other set of dependents or class of persons whatever. Now, however diverting the tragedy heroine's loss in front, might be to an independent spectator, yet to her it was a serious matter of reflection indeed, as it gave a stab to the possibility of her being retained at her comfortable habitation and agreeable prospect in the York company; for truth very plainly told her in strong terms, that a decent situation in any other company of comedians would be very unlikely, and almost a vain attempt to attain. However she lost no time in writing a full account of her case to Mr. Whitlock at Newcastle, who seeing her acting in a barn some two or three years previous to this fatal event, had with great kindness and humanity, supplied her defect in front, to enable her to attain the real necessities of life, and made her a present of the artificial set, which by too frequent use she had unluckily worn to the stumps, and was past all future service. However Mr. Whitlock,

touched with her story, and feeling how impossible it was for this once ornament of the stage, in the leading ladies, to perform any characters whatever without some immediate assistance, very charitably and generously sent her a set as a present, not expecting any gratuity for his labour. But whether he was wrong in the structure, or that the remaining soil did not contain mother-earth sufficient to take hold of his enameled materials, I cannot say, but she was incapable to new case or repair the defect: In consequence, it will readily be credited, she was obliged to retire,—it may be truly said to her winter chimney-corner of life, with all the dismal apprehensions of a doubtful fire. My benefit night the season she was with me, was on Saturday March 28, 1772. The play, the Fashionable Lover, written by Mr. Cumberland, which was the first year of its being produced in London: The character allotted her was Mrs. Bridgemore, and notwithstanding she was really married to the Captain Sweeny, a writ was issued against her for 20l. due to Mr. Miller, then manager of a company in Lincolnshire, which she had at different times obtained for the Captain's amusement at cards, dice, &c. I mention this circumstance, as it occasioned a very ludicrous incident, though not so to the unfortunate actress: For as she was coming to attend her theatrical duty, and accoutre her person for

Mrs. Bridgemore, she had barely intelligence sufficient to secure herself as speedily as possible, by flight from the hard-fisted bailiff. Now be it known good reader, that her person was very corpulent, and being worn and tired with care and trouble, added to the weight of years unthinkingly spent, it cannot be supposed that alacrity was in her range of remaining excellencies: But she, with the timid heart of a hare, set off for the Theatre, with all the full speed she was mistress of, but by instinct, as I may call it, she perceived the bailiff in full scent, who she artfully eluded by taking the stair-case up to my dwelling-house, instead of that to the playhouse passage; her rumble was great; I could not conceive the hurry approaching my dining-room door, when instantly with a rush and scream equally terrific to that of Mrs. Siddons in Belvidera, she entered the apartment breathless, pale, and full of tragedy horror, from fear and perturbation, and fell as prostrate and more naturally and picturesquely than she had ever presented herself to the public, either in Jane Shore, Constance, or in any other stage personage: Indeed she did not want me, her theatrical monarch, to bow to her, but to save her from misery, famine, and jail. When a little recovered from her fright, and unfeigned amazement, she related to me all the melancholy particulars, and the fear she had not only of being really taken prisoner, but the unhappiness it

would have occasioned additionally to her mind, to have had the new play, on her manager's night*, thrown into confusion; however the bolts and bars being secured, and her coming privately into the Theatre to dress, and all the doors barricaded and no egress or regress to strange face or faces, all went smoothly on. I kept her to sup with me, and detained her till past 12 o'clock, and on the Sunday morning, under the safe-guard, of two sturdy Yorkshire servants, appertaining to the theatre, had her safely conveyed to her lodgings; she then was secure, and at freedom to relate all the particulars, and proved indisputably, according to the laws of the land, that the bailiff had no right to arrest her, not only producing her certificate of marriage, but also alleging that Mr. Aickin, of the London Theatre, gave her away in marriage to Captain Sweeny, then living, though he had absconded from her. I wrote to Mr. James Aickin, of Drury-Lane Theatre, on the subject, who did not lose a post to relieve the distressed wife, and give me full information, that himself, or his brother (of Covent-Garden Theatre 1792) I believe the latter, had been her *papa* at the marriage ceremony, and given her hand at the holy altar in Ireland: This stopped any further law proceedings on that suit, against that

* Writs are generally served on performers when their services are materially wanted by the manager.

unfortunate, ill-fated woman. The last part she acted with me (I believe on any stage) was Mrs. Heidlebergh, in the *Clandestine Marriage*, on Saturday, April 11, 1772. I was the Lord Ogleby, and that was my last appearance that season, as I was preparing in a day or two, for a trip to Ireland, truly in character as the Wandering Patentee. Her benefit was but indifferently attended; for she was not sufficiently known or considered, to make her misfortunes a matter of moment or attention, otherwise no place, be it with truth spoken, is more ready than the city of York, to help the unfortunate and feeble;—they have on such occasions, hands as open as day for melting charity. When Mrs. Sweeny, with empty purse, departed from York city, she had no resource but that of producing herself in *propria persona* in the Green-Room in London, who, when she left that capital, was rich in gowns and fatins well befringed, yet was so altered in every respect by old Father Time and a train of misfortunes, that her feelings, on entering the gay metropolis and the theatre could not be of the most exquisitely pleasing, but the most poignant, kind: Not that she made her public entry into the Covent-Garden palace without a servant; for though her stage rich livery-pages had resigned, she was accompanied with the constant friend and servant at her heels; for pale-

faced poverty was her unchanging and attentive lacquey from that time to the end of her disconsolate and weary days. She was so reduced in pride and pocket, and looked so meagre, wan, and changed, that sollicitation was instantly necessary at the Green-Room of each Theatre for her immediate support: Such application was no sooner made, but with united heart and hand she was succoured and relieved, particularly from her former head quarters at Covent-Garden Theatre, where several of the performers, once her comrades, were existing, and anxious for her future welfare. But we all know that donations, however freely given at first, by too frequent applications become tiresome; and the once feeling heart at length grows callous, and the object at first, where distress sets the heart in alarm, the eye in a flood, and the hand in a tremble, all cease their sensibility, and what was nervous becomes estranged, strong fibred, and of another complexion: Such was the lot of this once first-rate actress. She ever preserved cleanliness to a degree that might have been a lesson to those of higher order, who seldom appear the goddess but when decked in false colours. Mr. and Mrs. Hull, her constant friends, were ever glad to let her partake of their friendly board. The last resource (after her various misfortunes, almost the whole of which disasters, were occasioned by false

pride and consequence) was, by the interest of Mr. Hull to be wardrobe-keeper and dresser at Mr. Love's little new theatre at Richmond; her weekly stipend of course was but small it may easily be conjectured, in a theatre of so narrow a scale, and of a season not more than three months in the year;—yet with that pittance, the kindnesses from occasional friends, and the goodness of the affluent in that paradise of a neighbourhood, not only enabled her to exist, but to live and die comfortably, and like a Christian: Experience had made the fool wise, and she had sense enough not to murmur, but be content with her strange and unexpected lot——From the full meridian

“Of her glory, she halted to her setting,

“She fell like a bright exhalation in the evening,

“And no man saw her more.”

I must record for her honour, that I never heard of or knew her guilty of the smallest dishonest, or mean action. She had gratitude in the extreme; and though I mean not to boast of acts of goodness from myself to that lady, I cannot help recurring to a trifle on my part to help a little. Seeing her at Mr. Hull's a year or two before her happy death, I shook her by the hand and pressing it, made her feel the mighty sum of half-a-guinea; her expression in gesture was such as I shall never forget, she spoke not, but eagerly

grasped my hand, kissed it, and wept upon it, and inarticulately said—"God bless you!" She would have bowed lower, but her feebleness and weight, and my shrinking from such a homage for "something, nothing," made me shudder to have suffered such a lessening to my insignificant self. But it certainly is a lesson for every self, and shews us "what we may be, as well as what we are or have been."

I must intrude a few words more on the subject, which is, to inform the public, or at least that part of the public who have not heard the true reason of the Theatrical Fund being established, was owing chiefly to the misfortunes of the late Mrs. Sweeny here recorded, which the frequent applications, as before hinted, made it inconvenient and impossible to comply with; and every one shuddered at what might be his or her fate from illness, old age, or "the thousand ills that flesh is heir to." Mr. Hull was the first proposer of that noble institution, which will be engraven not only on his tomb, but what is better, in the hearts of every brother and sister performer for ages yet to come. The institution is now made permanent for both the companies of comedians, of Drury-Lane and Covent-Garden, and will be a lasting monument for the credit of the stage and its professors. The Theatrical Fund was put into practice during the life of the

said Mrs. Sweeny, but what she was the happy occasion of, she was precluded from reaping any benefit from, as she did not at that time belong to either of the London Theatres; however she had, I believe, a handsome donation: And here I leave her as a warning to myself and others, as it is easy in every situation to direct and say,

“That want of prudence is a want of sense.”

Having at length finished my career with Mrs. Sweeny, before I close the York season of 1772, I must not omit to mention that Mr. YOUNG, from the Theatre at Edinburgh, made his appearance that spring, viz. on Thursday, April 21, in the character of Jaffier, also after that he played Plume and Macheath: He was well received. He is a gentleman of education, of a good family, and is a very entertaining companion;—~~was~~ bred a painter; and I am told promised much in that profession, but his propensity for the stage led him astray:—He has a genteel annuity from his brother—a man of fortune, and in general resides at Bath; he loves his bottle, his ease, and his inn:—The gout has humoured his indolent qualities, by honouring him with such frequent visits, as to prevent his being on those boards he loves to tread;—he also adds a taste for the Muses to his other good qualities.

Master and Miss WEST were also engaged that spring from Edinburgh, as dancers. They were the children of the late Mr. West of Drury-Lane Theatre. They had merit and assiduity to recommend them to the audience, and continued with me some seasons. Master West was remarkable for making what we call a good bill, and has drawn extraordinary crowds of all denominations on his benefit nights. In the course of their stay with me, Mr. Suett first felt the power of Cupid, and offered his hand and heart, his every thing, to Miss West, who very wisely accepted of all, and gave him grace for grace, and love for love; the ceremony was performed at York. I am informed that she makes a very good wife, but Benedict never told me for which of her good qualities he first suffered love. She has not appeared on any stage as a dancer since being Mrs. Suett, but combs the lap-dog, scolds the servant (not her husband)—and it is her own fault if in every respect she is not a contented woman. I never heard to the contrary—so I hope they will live long and happy together.

Now, patient reader, (for I hope you are so, or the Lord have mercy on me) I beg you will suppose it Saturday, April 25, 1772, and that I am packing up my matters for a visit once more to old Ireland, the liberality of which country I have so truly acknowledged with gratitude, in my

Memoirs. My travelling companion was Mr. Alderman Wallis, who the year preceding had been the Lord Mayor of York. I was favoured with his company, as business respecting a legacy, left him by a sister of the late Mr. Flood, made his presence necessary at that time in Dublin, to visit a Mr. Lee, his attorney, who was employed by the Alderman on that necessary business. We got safe to Holy-head on Tuesday evening, April 28, 1772, but we were obliged to stay there, as the wind did not serve for Ireland till the Sunday following, May 3, when the wind was fair, and in the evening we set sail, and arrived in old Dublin city early on the day following, May the 4th. We got to an hotel, a very good one, but I forget the street, nor is it material. I had as usual suffered great sickness on my voyage. We attended the Theatre in the evening,—the play was *Romeo and Juliet*—*Romeo*, Mr. Lewis, who was then a sprightly lad, but not more spirited or equally so as at this present day. He acted the part with much energy and promise. A Mrs. Sparks, a very handsome woman, was the *Juliet*, and I expected from her genius and fine eyes, teeth, &c. that she would have proved a beauteous flower ere this time; but her playing last winter in a country company in Scotland, and not maintaining her popularity at Dublin and Edinburgh, makes me fear she has either

not been properly nourished by the public, or that she has neglected herself.

On the Tuesday following Mr. Lewis did me the favour of a visit from his uncle. Mr. Dawson, then the manager of Crow-street, to whom I had engaged for seven or eight nights: I perfectly remember my prophecy to him on that day, now near 22 years since, that I should live to see him in the first situation in the London Theatre; which has been more truly verified than many of Mother Shipton's—who said

“Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be

“The largest city of the three.”

It did not a little please me to enter into a large Theatre, like that of Crow-street, once within my own memory filled with the first actors of the age, and the alteration on such a rapid decline, evidently to feel myself, as manager of the York Theatre, superior as to clothes, scenes, regularity of payment, and every degree of credit. But Dublin was then rent in twain by the weight of two theatres. There were, however, several performers of merit in each.—I was peculiarly happy with the reception of my remnant of friends; for that fell serjeant Death, had been strict in his arrest, and had actually deprived me of at least three out of four, in the short space of nine years absence. During my short residence that trip,

Dublin was rendered particularly agreeable by my never to be forgotten friends there; also the civilities I received there by the managers of each theatre, Mr. Dawson, and Mr. Ryder, and the performers, particularly Mr. Heaphey, who was very kind, attentive, and much attached to me. The Chaigneau's and the Forbes's families, so often mentioned in my Memoirs, were the only persons living of my old acquaintances. My Captain Ironsides, Major Sturgeon, &c. were particularly well received at the Theatre, also Colonel Oldboy, notwithstanding their partiality to the favourite actor, Mr. Wilder. I acted that whimsical father and soldier three nights with much encomium; whether deservedly or not, may be a query. My benefit in Dublin, that season, was well attended.

Mr. WILKINSON'S BENEFIT.

THEATRE-ROYAL, CROW-STREET,

MAY 28, 1772.

THE BROTHERS.

Mr. Lewis acted Young Belfield,—Mr. Vandermere, Sir Benjamin Dove,—Mr. O'Keefe, Skiff,—Mrs. Heaphey, Lady Dove,—Mrs. Sparks, Sophia:—I played Ironsides with the Commissary,—after which tragedy alamode, I con-

cluded with the following lines, which were afterwards inserted in Faulkner's Journal.

"What days, months, and years, has old Time hobbled

"o'er

"Since Candour with smiles, hail'd me last to this shore:

"A *hic et ubique*, long time did I roam,

"Till fortune at York has at length fix'd my home;

"But mem'ry there oft recall'd to my mind

"My patrons in Dublin—how social—how kind;

"A something—I know not—perhaps inspiration,

"(At least, I am sure, 'twas a strong inclination)

"A jogg gave my heart, which I could not withstand,

"For Dublin, my boy, 'tis of genius the land:

"Each visitor there with a welcome they greet;

"'Tis there Hospitality fixes her seat.

"In what my heart whisper'd, I safe could confide,

"Your candour, your kindness, e'er this I have try'd:

"Then accept thanks for present, and all favours past,

"And I still hope those favours may not be the last."

I must not omit a whimsical circumstance, which actually occurred one evening during my short stay in Ireland in 1773. I went to the play at Smock-Alley Theatre, where the entertainment was a Pantomime, which concluded, as is customary, with a dance. The first dancer was a Miss Archbold, and as the principal dancers it is well known are seldom incumbered with more than a short petticoat and a pair of drawers, by way of small clothes, it happened as that young

lady was capering with great agility, as she sprung up, her light petticoat flew down: It will naturally occur what a whimsical appearance the figure, so unaccoutred will convey to the reader's imagination; but the damsel, swift as lightening, jumped round, and stooping to achieve her lost petticoat covering, she presented another part most conspicuously to the public eye, and that so perfectly exposed to the scrutinizing eyes of the peeping audience, that I really thought the men, women, and children, would have died with laughter. Momus reigned triumphant; that god was irresistible, and bore down all pity and delicacy before the wind; and indeed her position was such as is related in the Dutch comedy, where the Miller is in supposed distress for a wind to set his mill a-going, when to supply the defect of the elements, he turns a certain part, (like Miss Archbold), at the mill, the which sets it a-going with prodigious velocity, to the great enjoyment of the Dutch audience, who think it highly entertaining and comic. That the circumstance relative to Miss Archbold, is strictly true in all the *nicest* points, I do aver; Mr. and Mrs. Cherry, now in the York company, were witnesses to that exhibition: It was highly necessary to let the curtain immediately drop, and relieve Miss Archbold from her distressed situation, and lack of garments; but it was some-

time before the audience retired from their continued impulse of laughter and joke; nor would they depart until the band complied with the universal demand, and played them out of the Theatre with the well known old tune, entitled and called "PETTICOAT LOOSE."

Before I quit my account of that trip to Ireland, and pant for my native home, I must beg leave to intrude one observation on the absurdity of two Theatres being established, with the view of advantage being possible, in any city in the three kingdoms out of London; the fallacy is too palpable: For if Dublin, which for nobility and opulence all considered, must weigh at least treble with any comparative town or city in Great Britain, was ever the ruin of the first distinguished performers, who were blessed with knowledge, experience, and merit in the most undoubted scale of truth, as Barry, Mossop, Woodward, Sheridan, &c. without tiring the reader with investigation, it clearly proves that I,—ay, simple insignificant *I* by itself *I*, am able to confute the language and studied opinion of the Lord Advocate of Scotland, who in this year I am scribbling, declared in the Court of Session, at Edinburgh, that two Theatres would secure the public good entertainment: For with one Theatre only, the manager would be secure of full houses, let him produce what trash he pleased; but with

two Theatres, the conductors of such amusements would be impelled to give excellent performers, or be deserted from want of proper attention to the entertainments of the Theatre. Now this doctrine or law-language may do in theory, but not in practice: For let me, with respect, ask the Lord Advocate of Scotland, where these excellent performers are to be hired!—Is London so prolific in theatrical progeny, as to vomit forth sterling merit, from the being overloaded with superabundant good actors and actresses? or do the country theatres so abound with various geniusses, that good flower-trees may be easily culled? No such thing: For two companies could not exist in Edinburgh, York, Bath, or any city in the kingdom, with comfort and ease to the inhabitants, or to the possibility of constant support to the opponent managers.—There were two companies, it is true, at Edinburgh, in 1793, undertaken by Mr. Stephen Kemble on the one hand, and Mrs. Estlin on the other; but it was the determined rage of party that supported the one, preserved its payments, and I believe that was all—no profits adequate to the weighty concern I dare affirm; and the other was not only attended with the loss of Two Thousand Pounds sterling, but what was terribly cruel, several of the performers who deservedly relied on their benefits, instead of gain, had not the ex-

pences of the nightly charges in their houses. In short, two houses in any city out of London, comparatively resembles the horrid devastation of war—certain ruin to both, and as certain a prognostic of bad entertainment to the public. For who of reputation will venture trouble, fatigue, and fame, (by choice) to encounter shame, disgrace, party-petulance, and famine. Another truly absurd reason alluded to sometimes by a snarler, is,—O the manager! that Wilkinson, or that Jenkinson, does not do his duty, and cares not how ill he treats the public; what a pity we have not another Theatre! Now I can most truly say for myself, as I believe on incontrovertible proof, that I never trust to the supposing any thing will do for the purpose: For I find it very difficult on the nights appropriated to me in the winter seasons at Hull and York, ever to get well-attended houses; nothing will do it but giving the best bill-of-fare in my power, which even often fails; and plays are so familiar every where in the present age, that the Million, or the persons of Ton, are not so eager to get to the play, merely because the doors are open, unless *walk in and see the surprising something*, is annexed and plaistered on those doors to excite criticism, judgment, and curiosity. Nay, to affix a certain judgment and criterion on the point of two Theatres—even in London, in the prime part of the

season, many nights and many added to that, they play (at one house or the other, and even sometimes at both) not only to very indifferent but very thin audiences. A theatrical observer need not fatigue his memory, by going further back, than by recurring to the great success of the Drury-Lane company at the King's Theatre in the Hay-Market, 1791, and the ill fortune of Covent-Garden the same year, till the Road to Ruin made Covent-Garden on something like equality—"THAT'S YOUR SORT." And in 1792-3, Covent-Garden has borne the bell, and the Hay-Market has experienced the reverse of fortune; frequently very, very thin audiences indeed; and they could not re-echo, "That's your Sort" with the force of an enemy, or the hilarity of a jocund friend. Now let the Lord Advocate try the experiment any year of two Theatres in Edinburgh, and he will find very few actors of any tolerable degree of merit, who would engage at the one most favoured and patronized. So understanding law, and a mere supposition of theatrical government, would prove widely different in the practice with the wisest heads;—but the management of armies, courts, and theatres, appear practicable over a bottle of Claret, or a dish of Coffee.

On my return to England there were two Theatres opened at Chester: I performed five or

fix nights at Mr. Miller's Theatre there, where I played Shylock and Lear. Mr. Whitlock was then young on the stage, but performed Edgar with great credit to himself and manager. My benefit only ten pounds: Indeed I never had a good benefit at Chester, though always greatly attended, when performing there at the Town-Hall at the desire of my acquaintance, many years ago. Here I engaged Mr. CASEY for the Leeds season, where he acted Shylock, &c. but on an offer of some partnership at Manchester, in the linen trade, he left me to enter into that business, and was so industrious and successful, that I am told he has left a handsome provision for his family. He died at Chester about two years ago.

Mrs. M'GEORGE, in Mrs. King's department, in the summer, 1772, quitted Mr. Miller's company, and joined my regiment of comedians at Leeds, where some few years before she had reigned as the Crawford or the Yates in high reputation and renown. Her first appearance under my government, was for the benefit of Mr. and Mrs. Powell, when she acted the Countess of Salisbury; but she by no means made the usual impression on the audience she had done so often at the head of a little company, in a playhouse only the size of a tap-room. Hence it is that performers often quit

a good provincial situation for a town engagement, and thereby lose all their established country reputation. A man or woman shall be at the height of greatness in Dublin, but will not meet near the same reception in London, as Mr. Sheridan, and Mrs. Fitzhenry:—An universal admired actress in London, will out of it be but coolly received, and less thought of in Ireland, Edinburgh, or York, whenever the vale of years is scalping off the bloom of youth and beauty.

Mrs. King left me early in the Autumn, 1772, for Ireland, and Mrs. M'George jogged on at an easy pace, and by the help of a well-formed figure, in the prime of life, she by degrees got into very good esteem. Mrs. M'George was the lady who headed a revolt in Edinburgh, at the Theatre, in February 1765, of which a full account is given in my Memoirs.

Mrs. SAUNDERS (formerly Miss Reynolds) was engaged from Drury-Lane Theatre, where Mr. Garrick altered the Country Girl, for that lady's merits to have fair play. She was approved there; but was careless and dissipated, and in consequence was dismissed. I never thought I should have seen that strange play, for this our present age, followed, even with a Mrs. Jordan, as it has been. For well as the characters may be drawn, they are coarse, and by no means of a

modern turn. To the credit of Yorkshire, that comedy has never been classed as a pleasing play, even when Mrs. Jordan performed the part of the Country Girl. Mrs. Saunders played the part well at Leeds, and retained several strokes of humour, which the great master of Nature, Mr. Garrick, had given her. He had taken great pains in tutoring her. She also acted Mrs. Honeycomb and Mrs. Cadwallader with sterling merit and deserved applause, but she let inebriety steal on her faculties in such rapid pace, as soon to overflow all her senses, and made her a prey to poverty and reflection. Mrs. M^cGeorge was well received, had good features and person, an excellent memory and attention, but had been spoiled and prevented the ripening to perfection; for being the heroine for several years at Manchester Theatre, under the direction of Mr. Whiteley, the applause and success she obtained, intoxicated her brain, vanity took the seat of reason; she was oftener wrong than right, and was very affected—Just such a heroine as Mr. Woodfall supposes all or most of our tragedy queens are, out of London.

Hull season past (with the alteration of the company mentioned) much as usual, without any particular occurrences. In the York season Mr. Mason's *Elfrida* was got up for my night, Saturday March 27, 1773, and received with much approbation. Mrs. Hitchcock singing the song of

"The Lark," was particularly admired. Mr. Hitchcock also produced a new comedy, called "The Macaroni," which met with deserved success. Lilliput, by children, was acted for the first time at York that winter, and all the characters were done most admirably. Miss Hitchcock was the Toadel, and Master William Powell, now of Drury-Lane, Lord Flimnap.—Mr. Garrick's alteration of Hamlet was that season tried at Drury-Lane, and to the astonishment of every one, well received, even by the Galleries, though without their favourite acquaintances, the Grave Diggers. I made application to Mr. Garrick for the copy, he did not choose to oblige me; so I set to work, and will here insert my compilation. I do it with less fear, for though the jumble is my putting together, yet as it is on the plan of Colley Cibber's alteration of Richard the Third, so the reader here will meet several obsolete passages from Shakspeare, that to one not very familiar with all that author's wonderful productions, may afford some entertainment.

HAMLET,

WITH ALTERATIONS.

In my alteration, the FIRST ACT ends with the line,

“Earth o’erwhelms ’em to man’s eyes.”

The SECOND with

“That ever I was born to set it right.”

The THIRD ACT is the second in the original, and the FOURTH is the third in the original. The fifth act in the alteration begins with the line

“There’s matter in these sighs,”

and goes on regularly to Laertes’s speech.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
And therefore I forbid my tears.

Tears! Wherefore tears? They rather should convert
To sparks of fire.—Let me but meet him, Heav’n.

Enter QUEEN.

Till that hour comes, time moves on drooping wings:
Revenge, revenge!

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that’s calm, proclaims me
bastard,

Cries cuckold to my father, brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste and unsmirched brow
Of my true mother.—For daring will I tell him,
Front to front—thus didst thou.

Ham. [*without*] What’s he whose phrase bears such
an emphasis?

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. Here am I, Hamlet the Dane.

Laer. Perdition catch thee! [*Lays hold of Hamlet.*]

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat,
For though I am not splenetic and rash,
Yet I have in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear.

Hor. Good, my Lord!

Ham. Hold off your hands!

King. Pluck them asunder. [*They are parted.*]

Hor. Good Sir, be temperate. [*To Hamlet.*]

Ham. Thou know'st my wrongs;—thou know'st my
soul is fixed.

I charge thee on thy friendship not to impede me.

King. [*Laying hold of Laertes*] Laertes, hold!—on thy
allegiance hold!

Claims not our royal person here respect?

Traitor! [*To Hamlet*] how cam'st thou hither against our
will?

Against our sovereign exprefs command?

(Now soft-ey'd pity hence, and keen remorse.) [*Aside.*]

Thou must rely on other shores for safety:

The cries of blood, blood all innocent,

Here loudly claim thee as a victim due.

I will not screen a murd'rer. Call officers. [*To Laertes.*]

Thy father's death shall instant be revenged.

Laer. My rage will urge me on with lightening's speed.
And my tumultuous grief pour balsam on my wrongs.

[*Exit Laertes.*]

Queen. Oh! let me kneel, and plead for gentle Hamlet.

King. Unworthy Queen, to call him gentle Hamlet!
Begone, nor let humanity attempt to thwart
The will of Heaven.

Ham. The will of Heaven!—Behold
In me Heaven's minister—in me my father.

King. Thy father, idle railer! What's thy meaning?
[*Enthusiastically alarmed.*]

Ham. Meaning! Ask thy conscience; let that answer.
I have not time to wage a war of words,
I must appear a blaze of vengeful terror.
By me my father speaks; by me he warns thee:
In me behold his dread, assur'd avenger.
The sword of Heaven is drawn—prepare—prepare—
The hour it come that sinks thee to perdition—

King. Curse on thy arrogance.

Ham. Would curses kill, as doth the Mandrake's groan,
I would invent as bitter searching terms,
As curst, as harsh, as horrible to hear,
Deliver'd strongly through my fixed teeth,
With full as many signs of deadly hate,
As lean-faced Envy in her loathsome cave:
My tongue should stumble in mine earnest words;
Mine eyes should sparkle like the flint-struck steel;
Mine hair be fix'd on end, like one distract;
Ay, every joint should seem to curse and ban:
And even now my burthen'd heart would break,
But that its sacred, just revenge doth claim thee.

King. [*Aside*] His words alarm! My fears must make
me daring—
If he lives I fall.

Queen. Sure guilt doth sink me. [*Aside.*]
Son—husband—I've no power of utterance.

[*Queen pleading.*]

King. Hence, Gertrude.—Traitor, have at thy heart!

Ham. Heaven bids at thine:

Thou art not worthy of so fair a combat;
But in this arm let justice strike thee. [*They fight round.*]

Queen. Oh, horror, horror, help!—Son—husband—
Oh, mercy—mercy!

[*Queen runs out shrieking, after which the King falls.*]

Hor. My Lord, how fare ye?

King. Curse on thy stripling hand—In this dread hour
My crimes o'erwhelm—Reason forsakes—and furies
rend me.

Death, thou hast snar'd me.

If thou be'st Death, I'll give thee Denmark's treasure,
So thou wilt let me live and feel no pain.

Ham. Oh! What a sign it is of evil life
When Death's approach appears so terrible.

King. [*Madly*] Bring me unto my trial when you will.
Can I make men live, whether they will or no?
I'll give my treasures but to look upon him:
He hath no eyes, the dust hath blinded them.
Comb down his hair.—Look! look! it stands upright!
Like lime-twigs set to catch my winged soul.

Ham. Oh, thou eternal Mover of the heavens!
Look with a gentle eye upon this wretch:
O beat away the busy meddling fiend
That lays strong siege unto his wretched soul,
And from his bosom purge this black despair.

Hor. See how the pangs of death encompass him!

Ham. Peace to his soul, if Heaven's good pleasure be.
O uncle, if thou think'st of heaven's bliss,
Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.

[*King looks without a sign and dies.*]
He dies and makes no sign:—O Heaven, forgive him!

Hor. So bad a death argues a monstrous life.

Ham. He's dead—forbear to judge,
For we are sinners all.

LAERTES, as entering with Soldiers.

Laer. [*Without*] This way my friends,—the King, the
King's in danger.

Guard well each avenue,—let him not pass,
But kill him rather—[*Enters*]
—How, thou bloody villain!
The king too murdered! Heavens my tardy hand
Should wither from its trunk for this delay
Of vengeance for an honoured father's murder;
My dear lov'd sister's hapless fate by thee,
Even in her earliest bloom destroy'd;
To me they call, loud shrieking from their graves,
With piercing cries, and claim thy forfeit blood.

Ham. Yet hear, Laertes! how canst thou use me thus.
I lov'd you ever.

Hor. Good Laertes, hear. [*Earnest.*]

Laer. No more—his breath is poison, and his sight
Is loathsome.—This for my king and sister:
This for my father's death. [*Fight.*]

Hor. My Prince in danger!
Let me bare my breast.

[*Horatio rushes between, Hamlet receives a first, then a
second wound, and falls into Horatio's arms.*]

Hor. Oh heavens, my master falls.—Within there!—
help!—

Enter Captain and Guards.

Ham. Rash youth, thou'st slain thy king, nay more,
thy friend.
The loss of life afflicts me not, Laertes;
My blood is due for thy dear father's death,
A fated unknown victim—Poor Ophelia.

For her my agonizing heart weeps faster
Than all the crimson drops thy sword has drawn.

Hor. It may be yet within the power of art——

Ham. Dream not of art, nor stir in my last moments;
I feel Death's arm, nor shrink within his grasp.

Laer. I'm lost.—Thy ways, oh Heaven! are intricate:
If I have err'd, impute it not——

Ham. When thou hast learnt the mystery from Horatio,
Thou'lt pity and forgive.—All I request is,
Comfort my hapless mother—ease her sorrows—
Relieve my country from distracting broils.
I could disclose—but oh,—I die,—Horatio,
Thou liv'st—report me and my cause aright
To the unsatisfy'd.†

Hor. Sweet Prince, whilst life doth course its vital
stream,
My trusty love shall tend thy memory ever.

Ham. Thou noble youth, exchange forgiveness with me,
Thy father's death dwell not on me, nor mine on thee.

Laer. Heaven make thee free of it.

Ham. Oh, I cannot live to hear what news from
England!

But I do prophecy the election lights on Fortinbras.
If so, tell him he has my dying voice,
With the occurrences, more or less, that have solicited—
The rest is silence—oh! [Dies.]

Hor. There cracks the cordage of a noble heart.
Adieu, sweet Prince!

And choirs of angels sing thee to thy rest.

Laer. My rage is gone, and I am struck with sorrow.
Bid the drum beat, the silver clarion sound;
Let them speak mournfully—trail your steel pikes.
Yea, he shall have a noble memory.

Take up the bodies—such a night as this,
Becomes the field, but here shews much amiss.

DIRECTIONS.—The soldiers turn their spears to the ground. Laertes not to bow at the conclusion, but continue looking over Hamlet—Horatio kneeling over the Prince. Drums beat muffled. Trumpets and the band play a dead march. The bell tolls and curtain drops very slow.—————

This was acted at all my Theatres, and well received, whether with any degree of desert, I will not presume to say. It was first acted at York, on Saturday April 3, 1773. In that month, in the same season, Mr. Younger sent down with urgent recommendation, a young gentleman from London to York, for his trial of skill: His name then, for family reasons, was RAYMUR, but he is well known as a gentleman, an honest man, and a very excellent actor in many principal characters, by his real name of MURRAY: He is at the Bath Theatre, where for several seasons he has been a deserved favourite. When he came to me at York, he had never acted on any stage; and benefits being appointed for every play night, I could not get a proper part for him to make his appearance in. Within five or six days of a Mr. GAY's benefit night, Wednesday April 21, 1773, he for some reason (I do not recollect what, it is so long ago) wanted "The Fop's Fortune,"

but we had not any Carlos : It was what we on the stage term *twenty lengths*, a part very considerable, and difficult cramp study ; and I dare aver Mr. Raymur had never read the play, nor seen it : However, without hesitation, he with joy to get on the stage, accepted the character, and actually performed it literally perfect, and was received as a good actor from that night ;—and owing to his apt study and retention, soon became an useful performer, and was in a few months in some principal character in my various catalogue of plays and farces ; for we play a greater variety than at any other theatre ;—plays in particular not bearing a repetition, as at Norwich, Bath, and many other places.

I shall here leave Mr. Raymur, but shall soon again take him by the hand before I let him depart from me, his first manager.

I will here introduce Mr. FLETEWOOD, from the Edinburgh Theatre, who made his first appearance at York, on Saturday May 1, 1773, in the character of Zaphna, in Mahomet, and was well received. He was the younger son of the late Mr. Fletewood, well known once as a gentleman of fortune, and as manager of Drury-Lane Theatre, previous to Mr. Garrick and Mr. Lacey becoming joint patentees and managers of that property ; consequently the gentleman I am here speaking of, was brother to the Mr. Fletewood

who appeared in *Romeo* at Drury-Lane, 1758. This, the younger Mr. Fletewood, was greatly esteemed at York and Hull; had been well known there by his acquaintance with Sir George Metham and Capt. Divies at Cave, near Hull.

This year was the second attempt I made at an expensive pantomime: I had the plan of the scenery, tricks, &c. of *Fortunatus* all sent in perfect order by Mr. Messink, from London: It pleased greatly at Hull and York, and every other town; otherwise any piece, attended with great expence, would never pay for such exhibitions; as a few nights in a season palls, where the audience is not various, as in London.

In 1772 *Fortunatus* was produced at Hull: It was the better pantomime than the *Sorcerer*, which was presented in 1773. *Fortunatus* has kept its ground, with a few alterations every time of its revival, from 1773 to the year 1793.

On an excursion to London, early in August, I met with my old acquaintance, Ned Shuter, at Coxe's Museum, and brought him down the week previous to York races. His first appearance was on Saturday, August 14, 1773, in the *Miser*, which character he sustained with great comic humour; and my reader may be assured he pleased in the extreme, for he really was a rich comedian, though not so in pocket. He also played *Don Cholerick*, *Falstaff*, &c. In the race-

week he played Touchstone, Fribble, (not a little inebriated) Justice Woodcock, Don Manuel, and Sir Francis Gripe. Mr. Lee Lewes at the same time performed Clodio, Marplot, Harlequin, &c. Miss Adcock, (Mrs. Weston) acted Lucy in the Beggar's Opera, Miss Notable, &c. with great merit and deserved applause.

Mrs. Weston was a wonderful favorite—better known to the theatrical world by the name of WILSON, who really threw excellent talents away, and died a martyr to her own folly; but she was past reclaiming—so we will drop the subject of the faults and frailties, and proceed with her from York to Leeds, where my friend Shuter went with me also; but what reigned over that town in those days I cannot tell, for I had an excellent company, and with the assistance of Shuter, Mrs. Weston, and long evenings, expected great success to a certainty. But Shuter, with all his London established fame, did not play to more than 12l. any one night, his benefit excepted, which was 45l. when he acted Falstaff, and gave his “London Cries.” Mrs. Weston pleased but did not excite any curiosity; the last night of the season, however, in October, she had a crowded benefit. I also had the addition that season, of Mr. and Mrs. King once more from Ireland. Mrs. King had not succeeded as she expected; her benefit in Dublin was but very

indifferent, and her payment of salary I fancy not the most punctual. Indeed in a theatre where the comings in are poor, the goings out cannot be great; for unless the manager can draw on the public his bill at sight, his pockets, like his theatre, will not boast an overflow.

So popular a performer as Mr. Shuter, not being attractive at Leeds was matter of surprise. The first season, 1771, I was astonished the houses should be so very poor in the Autumn season; for it has ever been held in conversation, that the play-house would be better attended in winter by many persons who could not go in the summer, not choosing to be seen by many fanatical observers; and I should have been of the same opinion, had I not played the years 1771, 1772, and 1773, as late as the 16th of October, and from that time to this, 1793, (Mrs. Siddons excepted) never knew any one night that was productive at that season of the year at Leeds.— Though Mr. Lewis, Mr. Kelly, Mrs. Crouch, Mr. and Mrs. Pope, Mr. J. Kemble and others have performed, yet all failed, not bringing near such receipts with their novelty and fashion, (which my books prove) as my nights have produced in the very longest and hottest days in June and July. What are termed Wilkinsons's *stock nights*, in June, are better supported on an average at Leeds, than at Hull or York, even in

the winter season—It may seem an odd assertion, but it is strictly true. It was losing so much at Leeds in the Autumn, which luckily occasioned my having a Theatre at Wakefield, where the last twelve nights a bad house is seldom known, and I am forced from my Wakefield patrons, by my call to Doncaster races.

I have said this to prove, that the numbers mentioned who would attend the plays in the winter evenings at Leeds, are chimerical; for if, as asserted, the day-light in June prevents persons from going to the Theatre, surely on the dark evenings in September and October, if they wish to be there, it would be better attended; but it is quite the reverse—For by repeated experience, in the Autumn the Theatre never has been noticed at all; and I am given to understand, that the manufacturers receive more wages in the summer from a more constant call for labour than in the winter, which in a great measure, with the assistance of the neighbouring villages, seats, &c. which are both rich and numerous, and the many visitors, who on their road to Harrogate, Thorp-Arch, &c. stop on purpose to pass an evening at the Theatre, evidently account for the summer plays having the superiority. For if even in London bad weather is a considerable drawback in the winter, as several benefits in 1793 will witness—For Mrs. Esten's, &c. were

materially injured by a succession of cold and wet evenings—how much more so would they be at Leeds, where the country in a great degree helps the town to support the Theatre: Besides, as another strong proof, the half-price receipts at Leeds in the Autumn, never were equal to those in June, but bad to a degree. The theatrical goers at Leeds have gradually improved, and the theatre has been on a much more established footing for some seasons, yet the best receipts have been in the early summer. The season 1792 was lucrative to me as manager, several of the benefits very capital, but nevertheless Mr. and Mrs. Popes' double-expected attraction failed in the Autumn of the same flourishing summer season, from which every expectation was derived, and that the success would have been as great, if not greater, as the days were shortened sufficiently, and the weather cold enough for every lover of the drama to attend theatrical exhibitions;—but it was not so—for they played on shares to very thin houses*. This is out of place; but though I have brought in my friends Mr. and Mrs. Pope, yet I shall not forget them when the proper period arrives, in this eventful history. Mr. Shuter, as September approached, went to attend his duty in London. Mrs. Weston was

* The season of 1793 has been a full cool loss.

not that season known in London; and she was glad to go with me for a few weeks to Hull; and as the lease of Beverley remained in my hands, two or three years after my unlucky fracas,—as mentioned in my Memoirs,—with Colonel Appleton of that town, I tried three or four nights there, which were well attended; though the taking the company, and treating with hot suppers, &c. took away the profits: But what then, “Youth’s the season made for joys,” and we had our pennyworth for our penny. I relate this circumstance, as a ludicrous accident occurred, which may be well remembered. The first or second play acted at Beverley, (which is only nine miles from Hull) on Tuesday November 2, 1773, was Cibber’s “Lady’s last Stake,” in which Mrs. Weston was Miss Notable, and Fletewood, before mentioned, acted Lord Wronglove. Mr. Fletewood inherited his father’s talent, of ever being in debt, and had eagerly incurred several when in the army, in which he had been in the earlier part of his life. He was then on half pay, and I believe as to age, not more than thirty-six; but one excuse may be pleaded for his being in debt, he kept good company, the which is not always a lucky circumstance for a young officer (on half pay, or indeed whole pay) who ranks with people of good fortune, falls into their expensive pursuits, and his pay perhaps all his ex-

istence, and appearances must as a gentleman be kept up: However so it was, a bailiff went one evening into the gallery, to make himself sure as to the identity of Fletewood's person; but as actors appear sometimes old and sometimes young, one night a lord, and perhaps the next a blacksmith, so that night, as Lord Wronglove, he was dressed in blue and silver;—lace was then common for gentlemen of rank in the boxes, and in every other degree out of trade. The worthy and benevolent Sir Charles Hotham, who is an honour to the neighbourhood of Beverley, and as well known in the great world and St. James's Palace, as any gentleman of this our noble kingdom, was in the boxes that night, and after the play, put on his great coat, it being a cold evening, and walked out of the Theatre, when on making some stop, and the bailiff having come from his upper station, to be ready for seizing his prey, Sir Charles Hotham had, luckily for Fletewood, and unluckily for himself, a suit of blue; the bailiff lost no time, but laid fast hold of his intended prisoner: Sir Charles expostulated, opened his great coat, shewed his star and garter, which only confirmed the bailiff on his being the identical Fletewood, saying with a sneer,—he knew as how who he was, for all his play-house tinsel and tringum tranghams. However some gentlemen accidentally

seeing Sir Charles's embarrassment, soon made the wolf-dog glad to retreat, and save himself a beating, assuring himself that where Wilkinson had ordered his supper at the inn, he should secure the rat in his trap. Sir Charles was so kind as to convey an account of the transaction from the boxes, to behind the scenes, warning Fletewood to take care of himself; so "our doors were locked, and our windows were blocked," we dressed Mr. M'George up in Lord Wronglove's blue and silver, and put him on a great coat, a slouched hat, and a silk handkerchief; it was the best part that *dead** good actor ever performed, and with much peeping, putting out a lantern, and the appearance of every precaution, the mock Fletewood proceeded with hasty steps, under the guard of two brother actors; a horse was ready saddled in the Market-place, and looking round cautiously, they in a seeming hurry attempted to place the feigned Fletewood on horseback: The bailiff not expecting the possibility of so sudden a deception, as well as unexpectedly being duped a second time, he with a rough-fisted assistant, rushed and seized his victim. The mock Fletewood, alias M'George, unbuttoned, shewed his blue and silver, saying he was a gentleman, but this was too great an affront to the tipstaff's sagacity, for a second time to have it supposed he

* A theatrical phrase for a very bad actor.

could mistake a player for a gentleman, that was IMPOSSIBLE, and being only an hour before disappointed and disgraced in his office, he had become as blood-thirsty as a French Democrat, and, after every assurance that the person was under a false arrest, and not the one the writ demanded, M^rGeorge with reluctance and feigned tears, was led to the inn, begging Mr. Wilkinson the manager might be sent for, whom he was sure would speedily come to his relief, and be bail in his unfortunate and distressed state. This succeeded as we could have wished, and as soon as he was housed, and the bailiff and his amiable attendant out of sight and hearing, the patient horse, which had been waiting under the hands of the ostler, was led down to the end of a back lane, where the trembling Fletewood eagerly lost no time to mount his Bucephalus, and only wished for the beast to have had wings to reach Kingston-upon-Hull, for there he was safe from the writ, it being a county and district of itself. To delay time and get my tragedy hero safe beyond the power of being overtaken, I sent word to the bailiffs to treat themselves and the prisoner, Mr. Fletewood, well, and I would be there in half an hour. It was no inconvenience that attendance to me, as it was the house where we were all to sup in full pomp at the hour of eleven, when all was over at the Theatre.—By

my well-timed delay, the run away actor was secure from all pursuit. On my arrival at the inn, and being shewn into the apartment of the bespangled stage nobleman, I started back, told the waiter he was wrong as to the room he had shewn me into; the bailiff answered he was quite right: I answered it could not be, for I wanted Mr. Fletewood! "Well," replied the bailiff, "here is Mr. Fletewood, your actor and my prisoner." I answered very sternly, that he was quite mistaken; and turning to the supposed debtor, said, "Pray, Mr. M'George, what is the meaning of your being in this situation?" "Why, Sir," said M'George, "I told the bailiff and his comrades I was not Mr. Fletewood,—but he would arrest me,—swore I was Mr. Fletewood,—and has dragged and forcibly brought me hither—for which disgrace and imprisonment"—(starting as in a violent passion, and laying hold of the bailiff) "I will have a swinging satisfaction." The great officer, hitherto so fierce and bold, feeling this second disgrace, was instantly transformed, as by magic, from a tiger to a sheep; and was very glad to produce a golden guinea, as a treat for M'George. The tipstaff and the whimsical story was the laugh of the populace from that day to the present, and is well recollected by the inhabitants of Beverley.

I retired from the bailiff's room, whom I left in the dumps, and joined my lords and ladies in waiting, who were impatient for their suppers: We had a very happy evening, and about three in the morning were conveyed safe to our different homes at Hull, wishing that

“What had a happy vision seem'd,

“Might be again repeated in a dream.”

This incident, I am well informed, reached the ears of Majesty, who very whimsically welcomed and congratulated the Knight of the Bath from his safe escape, as the supposed distressed actor. You see, reader, now and then, how merrily we players live; for as Mr. Sheridan observes, when players do agree, our unanimity is wonderful.

On November 17, 1773, in the first scene of the last act of *King Lear*, by a twist of my feet in the stage green-cloth, I dislocated my knee, and though I attempted to limp when afterwards lifted up by the assassins, yet I fell again, and was lame to a violent degree for a long time, and could not move but when strongly bandaged. It continued in that weak state till the Autumn following, though daily assisted by balsams, pumpings, &c. However three weeks at Scarborough, with constant bathing in the sea, produced a wonderful change,—but that leg was never so strong as since; having so terribly broken the other, that I

was obliged in natural consequence to depend on the former lame leg, which certainly gave it more strength and courage. I do not mean it as of importance to the public at large, whether Tate Wilkinfon breaks his leg or his neck, but I mean to mention what may be a general good, that with the dislocated knee and the unfortunate broken leg, it is astonishingly true the miracles I was so happy as to really experience from the effects of sea-bathing; how far it may be useful, or the contrary, in different habits of body, I am not physician or judge enough of the human frame to determine; but I am judge sufficient from proof-positive experience to aver, that for sprains and broken limbs, sea-bathing is superior to any other assistance that can be given. I have here introduced the subject, as neither age nor youth is exempt from such disastrous calamities, and for such relief the sea is highly entitled to my praises and acknowledgments.

Mr. Fletewood's first appearance at Hull, was on Friday October 8, 1773, in Tancred and Cadwallader. That winter I pursued my pantomime plan at Hull, at an expensive rate, and produced an entertainment of that kind, under the title of "Harlequin Sorcerer." A scene of great merit was introduced in it, painted by the late Mr. Dahll of Covent-Garden Theatre, whose genius as a scene painter must be well remembered, and many

proofs of his skill may be seen in the great hall at Harewood-House, where splendor, taste, and true magnificence, with hospitality is weekly seen and allowed, with due tribute of praise to Lord and Lady Harewood, who possess that noble and paradise-like situation. Miss Dahll the younger, who appeared at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the opera of *The Woodman*, in the spring 1791, and at York the following winter, is daughter to the late worthy and friendly Mr. Dahll, who was held in high esteem by all those persons who had the pleasure of his acquaintance or presided as judges of his merits.

Mr. Fletewood left me in the middle of that Hull season, 1773, for an engagement in Ireland.

Mrs. COLLINS was engaged that winter at Hull, who had merit in several comic characters, particularly in the old ladies: She is mother to the Miss Collins, now of great promise at Richmond Theatre, and appertaining also to Drury-Lane Theatre.

Mr. Raymur, from his first appearance, had kept due pace with application and every endeavour to get forward in his new profession as an actor.

Mrs. M'George having for more than a year played most of the principal characters during the desertion of Mrs. King, who not having come

from Ireland loaded with either riches or honours, and having deserted her patrons in Yorkshire, for the noon-shine of England, and not gained the sun-shine of Ireland, was not so popular in the eyes of the public or the performers : For though they partially before her desertion hailed her with songs of praise, yet as she did not return wreathed with laurel or additional trophies of honours, they neither attended her on bridges, stood in lanes, nor laid gifts before her, but in the stead, gave her coolness and eyes of reproach. And from a spirit of opposition Mrs. M'George had gained more friends than Mrs. King liked or expected ; therefore a natural spirit of resentment, jealousy, envy, disdain, and even hatred I may suggest, took root with every opportunity for discord between those rival queens. A dash on the floor has often a wonderful effect on the feelings of the galleries, whose humanity is such, as does not leave them a doubt but the fair Juliet, or the matron like Constance is much bruised and hurt, which tender idea affords double satisfaction to the gods in the gallery. I recollect that Mr. Murphy's tragedy of *Alzuma* abounds with such pleasant and terrific feats of *bury me alive*, &c. The first night that play was acted at York, 1774, Mrs. M'George who acted the part of Orazia, entered on the stage some time before Mrs. King was wanted for that of Orellana, and I believe

had prostrated her body at full length in tragic wo, with an additional dash more I believe than the author intended. Mrs. Hitchcock, who liked a laugh, went running to Mrs. King in her dressing-room, and almost out of breath cried, "Mrs. King, run, run! the stage is waiting, and "Mrs. M'George has thrown herself twice on the "floor with great applause!" Mrs. King on such intelligence pulled up her train, and as fast as her pompous dress and paraphernalia would admit, got to the wing and rushed on the stage, where being arrived, she lost no time, but violently presented her full figure on the centre, to her own satisfaction, and that of the applauding gods, who saluted her with thunder; and such things to me at that period were as entertaining and comic, as they are now by time, habit, use, and repetition become familiar, insipid, and non-entertaining.

Late in April 1774 I received an invitation from Mr. Digges, to play a few nights at Glasgow, where I went, and on my road, actually met with the adventure related by Mrs. Bellamy. My having furnished Mrs. Bellamy with a great part of her additional sixth volume, which many persons, I am assured have not read, will, I hope, plead my excuse for reclaiming and here inserting the story in its proper place. Mr. Woods and Mr. Bland of Edinburgh, Mrs. Inchbald and

Mrs. Webb of London, and a many others who are still living, must remember, and consequently will not refuse to attest to the validity and oddity of the whimsical fact.

In Letter 108, dated March 10, 1785, of her Apology, Mrs. Bellamy says——

“ The frequent mistakes which I find I have
“ made in the chronology of my theatrical anec-
“ dotes, will, I hope, be imputed to my reciting
“ them, as I have already observed, entirely from
“ memory ; and the deviation, I trust, will be ex-
“ cused by you and my readers, as the incidents
“ themselves, though perhaps erroneous in point
“ of time, are real facts. And was I now to set
“ about correcting the error by an alteration of
“ the dates, I fear, as many of them happened at
“ so distant a period, such a step would only be
“ productive of greater mistakes.

“ I have received some corrections on this head
“ from Mr. Wilkinson, Manager of the York
“ Company ; for which I acknowledge myself
“ much obliged to him, though I cannot, for the
“ reason just given, avail myself of them. As I
“ have mentioned the name of that gentleman, I
“ will entertain you with some anecdotes of him,
“ which I think you will not be displeased with.

“ Mr. Wilkinson, about ten years ago, was
“ engaged by the Managers of the Edinburgh
“ and Glasgow Theatres, to play some nights
“ with each of them. Being upon his journey
“ from the former city to the latter, he stopped
“ at the half-way house to dine; and, as I have
“ given you in my “Apology,” an account of
“ my agreeable journey from the capital to the
“ delightful city of Glasgow, I can, even now,
“ accompany him, in idea, in his pleasing tour.
“ When the dinner was served up, he found
“ there was great plenty of provisions, and only
“ himself to partake of it. The quality, indeed,
“ of the several dishes was not of the most dainty
“ kind, the people of that country being in ge-
“ neral not very particular in that point; as their
“ giving me, upon my arrival in Edinburgh, a
“ piece of course thornback for turbot, must have
“ convinced you.

“ Mr. Wilkinson seeing the table thus spread
“ with more viands than were sufficient for one
“ person, rung for the master of the inn (the
“ mistress, in that part of the world seldom being
“ visible, but to a favoured few) to inquire
“ whether there was any company in the house,
“ who would partake with him of the plentiful
“ dinner, and pass a sociable hour with him
“ after.

“ To this the host replied, that there was only
“ one gentleman in the house ; who, he dared to
“ say, would be glad of the offer, as soon as he
“ came down stairs, which he was then about to
“ do. Upon Mr. Wilkinson’s asking if he knew
“ the name of the gentleman, the landlord readily
“ told him it was Mr. Wilkinson, the Manager
“ of the York Theatre, who was *walking*, by
“ choice, to Glasgow, where he was engaged to
“ perform a few nights.

“ Struck with this intelligence, the *real* Mr.
“ Wilkinson informed his host, that there was
“ not a man in the world for whom he had a
“ greater regard than the Manager of the York
“ Company, and therefore should be extremely
“ glad to see him. At the same time he could
“ not help inquiring, what was the reason of the
“ Manager’s lying a-bed so late, it being then past
“ four o’clock in the afternoon. He received for
“ answer, that Sir John Sinclair and some of his
“ friends having spent the preceding evening
“ there, and hearing that so celebrated a per-
“ former was in the house, they had requested
“ the favour of his company to sup with them.
“ This invitation the pedestrian traveller had rea-
“ dily accepted ; but unfortunately had *fmoaked* *

* It is very unusual to call for pipes in Scotland, as well as
in England, among gentlemen of any politeness.

“so much, and made so free with the bottle, that
“it was with great difficulty he could be got to
“bed.

“It must be supposed, that Mr. Wilkinson was
“not a little impatient to behold a person who
“had thus assumed his name. He accordingly
“requested that the gentleman might be immedi-
“ately introduced. When, to his no small sur-
“prise, in walked a figure, not the most *prévoyant*
“in his appearance, and who turned out to be
“Mr. Chalmers of the Norwich Company.

“Mr. Wilkinson assured his name-fake that he
“was extremely glad to see him; but as it would
“have been imprudent in the highest degree, to
“suffer the counterfeit Sofia to carry on the de-
“ception any longer, an explanation, not of the
“most agreeable kind, took place. Chalmers
“finding himself thus detected, apologised for
“the liberty he had taken; and by way of excuse
“said, he thought the name of the Manager of
“the York Company a much better travelling
“name, and more likely to procure him *credit* on
“the road, than his own.

“Naturally endowed with much good-nature,
“Mr. Wilkinson accepted the apology, notwith-
“standing the unwarrantable conduct of the
“other; and having granted his new compa-
“nion forgiveness, they sat down together to
“dinner. This lenient conduct procured the

“ real Manager so many acknowledgments from
“ the fictitious one, and so many bumper toasts
“ to his health and prosperity, which, out of com-
“ plaissance, he was obliged to pledge, that he be-
“ gan to find that a continuance of his courtesy
“ would soon reduce him to the state his com-
“ panion had been in the night before, and com-
“ pel him to lie till as late an hour the next day.

“ By this time, Chalmers had poured down
“ his throat two bottles of Edinburgh ale, and
“ more than a bottle of port-wine, exclusive of
“ several drams; and he was now bawling, like
“ Trapanti, for more. Such being the situation
“ of things, Mr. Wilkinson thought proper to
“ put a stop to it, by calling for the bill.

“ When it was brought, Chalmers, with great
“ effrontery, considering what had passed, very
“ composedly requested that his companion would
“ pay the whole of it, promising to pay his share
“ when he reached Glasgow, where he was en-
“ gaged to play a few nights at a very high salary.
“ As Mr. Wilkinson had intended to consider
“ him as his guest, he discharged the bill, and
“ ordered the chaise to be got ready immediately.
“ And when it drew up to the door, Chalmers,
“ without being in the least restrained by the
“ offence he had given, requested that he might
“ be permitted to make use of that conveyance
“ to Glasgow.

" This request the easy Manager likewise complied with; but just as he was entering the chaise, another bill, to the amount of two pounds and upwards, was put into his hands, specifying that it was for fundries had by Mr. Wilkinson. Upon his inquiring of Chalmers how the demand arose, he coolly told him, that he had found it necessary to regale himself there, during the two preceding days, in order to recover himself from the fatigue he had undergone in walking from Edinburgh, and to enjoy the beauties of the country.

" Though Mr. Wilkinson did not much relish this part of the adventure, yet, believing that his new acquaintance was really engaged to play at Glasgow, as he had assured him, and that there was consequently a chance of his being reimbursed, he discharged this bill also. Nothing now retarding their journey, he would have set off; but his companion could not be prevailed on to stir, till he had tossed off two bottles more of the Edinburgh ale.

" When they arrived at the end of their journey, being heartily tired of so disagreeable a companion, Mr. Wilkinson desired at the inn to be shewn into a room by himself; and immediately despatched a messenger to the Manager of the Glasgow Company, (Mr. Digges) requesting to speak with him. As soon as

“ that gentleman arrived, after the first salutations were over, he congratulated Mr. Wilkinson upon his recovery from the debauch he had committed the evening he was in company with Sir John Sinclair. This of course led to an explanation; when Mr. Digges, justly incensed at such a flagrant fallacy, declared that he neither had, nor would by any means, engage the perpetrator of it.

“ The consequence was, that Chalmers finding his delusive schemes prove unsuccessful, (as indeed they generally do) he was obliged to have recourse to the humanity of the performers. A collection was accordingly made for him, to which my good-natured friend, notwithstanding the impositions which had been practised upon him, contributed his quota; thereby giving another proof of the extent of his good-nature.

“ G. A. B.”

If it is urged by many that the poor story had been in Mrs. Bellamy's Life, I must know who sent her the account, and have here given the fact as she dressed it, *verbatim* from that book*. I have

* The Chalmers in Mrs. Bellamy's story, was father to the Chalmers who lately acted at York.

quoted very little from other publications; but I must observe that almost two volumes out of Mr. Victor's three, are entirely taken from Cibber's Apology and old pamphlets of Mr. Sheridan's, when that gentleman was first manager, relative to the ill behaviour of riotous young gentlemen, when he at last luckily established order and decency in the Irish Theatre; also the long hackneyed account of the great riot in 1754, on the representation of Mahomet. This being a true allegation against a man of letters, will certainly plead an excuse for my robbing myself, who am a man of *strange letters*. If an unknown reader wonders what kind of being I am as a companion, he will be perhaps perfectly satisfied, when I assure him the wild incoherent manner of the book is exactly my mode of conversation.

Now I have forgot what I was last talking about,—O I recollect, I had got to the elegant city of Glasgow, by the assistance of Mrs. Bellamy. While I was there acting Lord Ogleby, Ironsides, Colonel Oldboy, &c. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson were supplying my *infinite* loss at York. The reader I perceive sarcastically smiles at this assertion; but I can assuredly assert, that once on a time, my Bayes, Zanga, Shylock, Sir Archy M'Sarcasm, and many principal characters, were received not only with approbation and applause,

but great partiality from the York audience. I have lived to see almost the end of my stage life, and will quit without regret, what will leave me in few years whether I will or no. Why should Death be feared, since he will come when he will come? For having played thirty years on the York stage to one audience, a different stage from that of London, where a rainy day will make audiences spring up like mushrooms; consequently the best performers, from their seeing so much variety, will never be attractive at York for a long continuance: And indeed my own ideas are so far suited to theirs of York, as to think that variety makes the feast both on and off the stage.

The WANSCHORS were engaged at York, May 1774. The Company on my return from Glasgow, took the annual rout for Leeds; the troop much the same as lately related. I must mention one circumstance of the very polite invitation I was then honoured with by Mr. Barstow of Leeds from Lady Fleming, (now Lady Harewood of Harewood-House) when that lady bespoke the play of "The School for Wives," June 29, 1774; on which occasion there was a very elegant audience.—Favours I never forget—nor does ingratitude rank in the catalogue of my numerous faults and foibles.

At Leeds 1774, Mr. Moody acted Major O'Flaharty, Colin, Teague, O'Clabber, Henry the VIII. Ironsides, &c. and at York assizes, the same characters. Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkeley happened to be also at York—They acted the Citizen and Maria for Mr. Moody's benefit, their first appearance on that stage.

On the Saturday in the York assize-week, after the play, a violent storm arose between the parties, Mr. Dodd and Mr. Moody, which naturally subsided as other tempests do, into a calm and serenity.

Colonel Appleton's treatment about that time, having rendered Beverley to me a very disagreeable and doubtful situation, I luckily obtained Wakefield for the season of the year usually allotted to Beverley, which on the first trial answered so exceedingly well, that I had a regular and commodious Theatre built there, which is frequently honoured with an audience of elegance, not to be often seen in many of the larger towns of this kingdom. The neighbourhood of Wakefield is opulent, genteel, and numerous; and whenever they please to be unanimous, and patronize the Theatre, a stranger, even from London, would be astonished at beholding the number of gentlemen's elegant carriages attending that Theatre, to convey their wealthy and spirited owners to

their neighbouring villas*; several of which may be termed palaces.

At the end of Wakefield Mrs. M'George deserted, and left Mrs. King in full power. We had a shabby Theatre there, but better than the inhabitants of that town had ever been accustomed to. Decent Theatres in the country were almost unknown thirty years ago. We had to oppose Mr. Whiteley that season: However we not only obtained victory, but defeated and routed the enemy. We advertised as *HIS MAJESTY'S SERVANTS*—our opponents as *SERVANTS OF THE PUBLIC*. It is often mentioned my returning to Wakefield again, from Doncaster, as well worthy of my attention, but they do not consider the immense expence I would incur thereby.

I here present only part of the bill, not only as a curiosity, but to see how merit sometimes rises, and meets its due reward; as Miss Farren and her sisters were my opponents, also my present hero, the worthy Mr. Cummins.

* The spirited John Milnes, Esq. has one of the most elegant furnished houses of any private gentleman in the kingdom.

(1774)

FOR THIS WEEK ONLY,

By the *SERVANTS* of the *PUBLIC*,At the *THEATRE* in the *GEORGE-YARD*.*This EVENING will be presented the celebrated TRAGEDY, called***KING HENRY II;****Or, The Fall of Fair Rosamond.**

(Written by Mr. Hull, as it was performed in London with universal applause)

What has been said of this excellent play, in the public papers, is sufficient to testify its merit; and the story of King Henry and Fair Rosamond is so well known to people of every rank, to be one of the most interesting and pathetic stories that grace our English annals, that it is totally needless to comment further upon it.

To gild refined gold, or paint the lily,
To shed a perfume on the violet,
To smoothe the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow; or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

And wasteful and ridiculous it would be to say any thing in its praise, when presenting the world with such beauties as are rarely met with.

Lord Clifford, - Mr. CUMMINS.
Queen Eleanor, - Miss PHILLIPS.
Fair Rosamond, - Miss WHEELER.

Singing between the Acts

By Mrs. RICHARDS and Miss FARREN.

To which will be added, a New Pantomimical Entertainment in grotesque characters, called

OLD MOTHER RED-CAP.

With all the incidental Scenes, Machines, and Decorations. The Overture and Music entirely new, and composed by Mr. Clagett.

Mother Red-Cap, - Mr. WHITELEY.
Scaramouch, - Mr. CUMMINS.
Hymen, - Miss P. FARREN.
Servant Maid, - Miss K. FARREN.
Columbine, - Miss FARREN.

-With a *VIEW* of the *INSIDE* of the *PANTHEON*,In which will be introduced a *MASQUERADE*.

Masquers by Mr. SMITH, Mr. OWEN, Mr. RICHARDS, Mr. WOOD, Mr. WHEELER, Mr. PETERS, Mr. RICHARDS, Mr. CUMMINS, Mrs. CLAGETT, Mrs. WHEELER, Mrs. OWEN, Miss FARREN, Mrs. FARREN, Mrs. RICHARDS, &c. &c.

Mr. Woods was engaged that Hull season, 1774. I had first seen him in the spring that year at Glasgow. A gentleman of talents as an actor, and respected by every body as a man of honour and strict integrity off the stage, also of good education and a poet. He from his earliest time on the stage has never quitted his Scotch friends—and indeed they may be truly termed so—(the year he was with me excepted). And though his reception in Yorkshire, was flattering and respectable, (and be it understood also he is a native of England)—yet never was he more happy I dare affirm, than when he re-crossed the Tweed, to visit his noble patrons in the city of Edinburgh. His first appearance at Hull, was in Hamlet, October 14, 1774, much approved, particularly (for his credit) by the judicious.

Miss WAUDBY of Hull, made her first appearance, Thursday December 1774. As a native of the town, that young lady was well received: A pretty young woman, but wanted power and talents for the stage:—Her beauty captivated my prompter.

Mrs. REDDISH (wife of Mr. Reddish, the well-known actor, who died in the York Asylum) appeared at Hull, in the character of Zaphira: A good person, but not by any means adequate to so

leading a part in the drama, as that of Zaphira : Mrs. Reddish did not therefore continue that winter.

Mr. and Mrs. CORNELYS, well known on the Norwich and the Dublin stages, were engaged that season, and continued till the autumn 1775. She made her first appearance in Mrs. Oakley and The Irish Widow, December 9, 1774, at Hull. She possessed much merit, as did Mr. Cornelys, in the low comedy characters: He was approved at Hull and York, in Abel Drugger. Mrs. King kept her ground, but was not by any means in that high esteem with the public she had formerly been. Master and Miss West continued, with the additional performers mentioned.

I opened the York Theatre, Jan. 1775.—Flete-wood returned, and engaged till June 1776. His first appearance on his return, was on April 29, 1775, when he acted Hastings. Mr. and Mrs. King, Mr. Powell, and Mr. Charles Wood, left me in May, the end of the York season, 1775. Miss Waudby was highly offended in that sprightly month of May, on account of being given the part of one of the ladies of pleasure in The Beggar's Opera. Perhaps there is not any play which so often occasions unhappiness and disputes out of London, as that said Opera: For it requires a number of women; and the leading ladies of the

tragic or genteel comic walk, will not appear in such characters on any account, nor do the ladies of inferior quality, submit with a grace, neither will they, without much bickering, play the w—e. The gentleman alluded to led her off the stage—he fell prostrate—she quickly raised him, and they were soon after united in holy bands. She quitted the stage, for a more eligible station, where, as persons of worth, and himself a man of genius, great study and industry, they had the general esteem of many respectable and leading families in York. The lady is dead, and he is in an increasing situation as to good connections, improving in his fortune, and allowed to give instructions for the care of the soul, and by that means bestows health on the body and peace to the mind as an excellent preacher. We parted on good terms, as I can readily and incontestibly prove from three or four letters, now lying before me, the which I was favoured with from that reverend pastor; where the professions of friendship are as flatteringly as earnestly expressed, and must certainly much gratify my pride and feelings, in the being assured I am favoured with the good wishes and esteem of a person who possesses religion, talents, and understanding.

Suett was at that time (1775) rapidly improving. Mrs. King had an offer from Mr. Garrick, which she accepted. He had heard a good account of

her acting, &c. and was in hopes to have made her a curb on Mrs. Abington and Miss Young; those ladies frequently trying his patience, and teaching him philosophy: He who had been used to rule, was over-ruled, as was the language of newspapers and magazines at that time. Mrs. King left me early in the summer 1775, made her debut in the autumn at Drury-Lane, in *Rosalind*, and was well received: Indeed so well, that in order to mortify Miss Young (now Mrs. Pope) Mr. Garrick had interest at Court sufficient for his Majesty to have that play ordered, on which occasion, his new actresses was thus advertised in the bills of the day,

And *Rosalind*, by *Command*—by Mrs. KING.

Mrs. King however did not please as a first-rate, though of great utility. I saw her play *Lady Macbeth* on the sudden indisposition of Mrs. Yates, and *Lady Fanciful*, on the illness of Mrs. Abington, and that to Mr. Garrick's matchless performance of *Sir John Brute*. But still she only played principal characters, when necessity brought her before the audience, at a few hours notice, and was obliged to trust to her memory for what she had acted in the country the year before that of her unexpected exaltation at Drury-Lane. She acted Mrs. Knightly that season repeatedly, as it was revived by his Majesty's order

for the purpose of seeing Mr. Garrick in that insipid character of Sir Anthony Branville. An unlucky part was sent her the latter part of the season, which materially injured her in the opinion of the public, which was the principal one in a bad farce, called "The Spleen; or, Illington Spa." That piece was pushed by the Manager, against the will of the audience, yet by perseverance in repeating it, the audience that attended, allured thither by some strong play, either partly retired, or yawned over the first part, and the remaining few were all up, and solemnly departing, while Mrs. King was speaking a bad epilogue to the backs, not the faces of the remaining audience. This brought her into disrepute and neglect, and of course she was much chagrined and disappointed, and at the end of the season was not retained at Drury-Lane, nor I believe wished to be. But her not being received in a principal light, and spoken of as a first-rate in London, of course lowered her fame in the country. Our theatrical barometer is much guided by London criticisms and decisions: That was the very season I believe that Mrs. Siddons made her first appearance in Portia, and did not succeed; and is a proof that a London audience, though beyond doubt, the true criterion, is not always infallible, any more than the most eminent physician. Mrs. King retired from Drury-

Lane, into a country company. Mrs. Siddons went to Manchester, from which place her increase of fame escorted her to Bath, and there the eyes and ears were so open to conviction, that real fame and confirmed reputation, mixed with wonder, attention, and unceasing applause, restored her to London, where they have embraced and locked her fast, with every reward that applause and overflowing bounty can bestow. To use her own words, she was "a lamp not to be extinguished." Her stage merits are universally known, and I have honoured myself with the enumerating them in my Memoirs, therefore any of my tautology or eloum here would be ridiculous. To repeat of Mrs. Siddons what every body knows, that she is not only beyond a doubt, in her particular line, the first actresses of the present day, but also in a general view undoubtedly superior, take her for all in all, to the excellences of any actresses the most snarling critic or true judge of dramatic merit, that can be remembered, in any theatrical tradition. Much has been said of Mr. Garrick's being jealous of Mrs. Siddons's powers; but that must have been a very weak surmise, for he certainly entertained a slender opinion of her abilities, and Mr. Woodfall the same, who recommended her to return to country theatres, where the feebleness of her voice might be insured a hearing. To prove that

Mr. Garrick's opinion was *not* singular, Mr. Brinsley Sheridan was in possession of Drury-Lane Theatre the winter following, and it is evident he did not esteem Mrs. Siddons worth retaining; on the which she and Mr. Siddons had placed great reliance.—Now, had Mr. Sheridan's eye been more penetrating than Mr. Garrick's, he would not have missed the honour and credit of being himself the polisher of the rough diamond to its present lustre. It was her own worth, by the aid of impartial judgment, that stamped that merit, which for many years agreeably surprised Mr. Sheridan's coffers with overflowing guineas; and I dare swear he would not have been angry, had the Siddonian stream of success taken its flowing course in the year 1776-7, instead of the current being stopped till some years after.

I perceive here that by creeping into Mrs. Siddons's company—as who would not?—I have left Mrs. King behind. To supply her place at York, I had engaged a lady of fame in the west, from Exeter, a Mrs. HUDSON. Her person was not very good, but her face was remarkably handsome: She acted Jane Shore at York, in May 1775, and was not much approved of, but being very perfect, with perseverance and assiduity, she by degrees grew into good favour in my cir-

cuit, and at Doncaster in particular she was held in first-rate esteem.

In May 1775 I also engaged Mr. OWENSON, a gentleman well known in Ireland: He was a great assistant in the operas—his person tall and handsome; he played the Irishmen very well.

Mr. DEATH was also engaged, who has acted not only in York, but at Norwich, Mr. Foote's, and most of the companies in Great Britain. His cast was the Smarts and Footmen.

Mr. Hitchcock produced in the Hull season, in November 1775, a new comedy, called "The Coquette, or the Mistakes of the Heart." I recommended the subject to him, from the pleasing novel of "Betsey Thoughtless," and I think Mr. Hitchcock might have made it more whimsically distressing, as that heroine's thoughtlessness gives *fair scope* for more variety than any character I know; and I wonder it has never been thought of by some dramatic writer. Mr. Hitchcock's "Coquette" is by no means destitute of merit, either as to plot or dialogue, but he certainly might have improved it in many respects, and made it more entertaining. That comedy and his "Macaroni," were both regularly authorized by the Lord Chamberlain.

In the August races, 1775, Mr. Lewis favoured me with a visit. He acted Archer, Gratiano, Hamlet, Lord Townly, Beverley, Young Wilding, Romeo and Dick;—Mrs. Lewis,—Portia, Lady Townly, and Juliet. I need not add so excellent an actor was well received, nor shall I dwell on his merits, having taken that liberty in my former production; therefore superfluous praise would vex, not please him, and he would only laugh at me and my nonsense, and tell me I was fond of writing. Mr. Lewis acted also part of those characters at Leeds, three or four nights after our close at York.

From Leeds early in September 1775, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis left the north for the south, and I and my theatrical regiment marched for pleasant quarters to Wakefield, which has ever been attended with welcome, benevolence, and success. Not any thing worth the mentioning: We were still in the bad little theatre in the Bull-Yard, where I revived in three acts, as a second-piece, on account of the name, "George O'Green, the Pinder of Wakefield." This Piece may be found in Doddsley's collection of old plays;—I think it may be twisted into a comic opera: Mr. Hull, I am informed, has some such intention.

By the interest of General St. Leger, and some leading gentlemen at Doncaster, Mr. Richards, then Mayor, September 1775—to whom I was

and am particularly obliged for his friendship and kindness, also to the whole Corporation and the public in general, not forgetting Alderman Whitaker and his family, Alderman Heatton, Messrs. Woodcock, Dunhill, Foster and others, to whom I am under many obligations for their yearly kindneses, as well as for their so long ago obtaining the town of Doncaster, which was a very great addition to my theatrical territory, in profit, fame, and convenience—it being only 18 miles from merry Wakefield. In the year 1775, when I had the honour and pleasure to attend Doncaster races, I and my company had only the Town-Hall to perform in, but by the interest of those gentlemen lately mentioned, I obtained a lease for a new elegant Theatre, then building by the Corporation, to commence 1776, at which place I have continued, and hope I shall visit it yearly while I am able to be wheeled round to my six theatric situations.

My first year at Wakefield, a Mrs. MONTAGUE surpris'd me at my quarters, and requested to personate Queen Margaret in the Earl of Warwick, as a specimen of her abilities. At the rehearsal, on the night of her performance, and on and off the stage, she seem'd to be as wild as an untamed colt. She was of a good family at

Norwich; I believe that her mother is still living there, though her daughter, alas, is not, having departed this life some years ago in Ireland. She was of uncontrollable spirit, when provoked, even with the least reason, and when the fury was over, was easily led, full of contrition and good humour till a new breeze fanned the fire and set the billows of her mind once more raging, and all was storm and fury, till her palpitating heart split on the rock against which she wilfully rushed her ill-guided bark. She gave such good promise of strong genius, that I immediately engaged her at Doncaster for the ensuing winter: Her person was good; she wore the small clothes with a grace; her powers and voice were uncommonly excellent; her dialect very erroneous, and her ear not very exact, nor her mind equal to the patience of much teaching; but I verily do believe had a person with patience and judgment, had power over her unthinking mind, that she would ere this have stood foremost in the rank of fame amidst the various candidates which have produced themselves to the public. She was so well received at York and Hull, that indeed I did not entertain the least doubt but with perseverance, I should have my Queen Dido ravished from me, by the eagle talons of a London Manager, who would place her on a theatrical pinnacle for the great world to wonder at. However the

winter 1775, at Hull, and the winter and spring of January, February, March, April, May 1776, at York, the public seemed much inclined to forward her merits and were equally pleased with the attention and improvement of Mr. Raymur (now Murray).

I had the Drury-Lane Pantomime of The Genii got up that season; it pleased well, as indeed it ought, for it was produced at a great expence, and was the occasion of a young man of great merit getting forward in life, who is now well established in his particular line;—his name is Julius: For as I was projecting the Arabian Night's Entertainment of the Genii, my painter had not time to finish a palace-scene and wings for the last change, when Mr. Southerne of Hull, who is well known as the leading dancing-master there, luckily recommended young Julius, who, struck with the opportunity of an undertaking so opposite to his common daily work of the brush, flew to the new-appointed office with the utmost avidity, and executed the difficult task in a style wonderful for the small time allotted, when considered as a first attempt. After this he could not bear to submit to the dull daily repetition of smearing the heads and tails of ships, and the doors of ale-houses, tobacconist's shops, warehouses, &c. but flew to the Metropolis, where he tried for a long time to labour for ex-

istence as Mr. Nobody; and that is a very precarious and doubtful existence in London, and is perhaps the worst of all other places, till a name is got, and then Mr. Devil, accounted as *the artist*, will be courted, and bear a good name, while Mr. Angel, *the limner*, is termed the devil of a painter, a dauber, and is left in a truly devilish situation. However it was a lucky stroke in the end for Mr. Julius, for his perseverance and strong natural genius surmounted all difficulties, and he is now well known, as I am informed, in London, and has obtained prizes at the Royal Academy.

The Mr. Southerne just mentioned, has great merit as a professor in the art of teaching young ladies and gentlemen to walk, move, sit, and what is more difficult, how to stand still. Mr. Southerne may sometimes talk out of time, but he keeps his scholars to proper time and place, and has one undoubted praise-worthy quality, he is the most indefatigable father for fixing a numerous family with credit, of any man I know; and all who have families must know, in almost every state of life, how difficult, expensive, and harrassing it is to get young people so established in the world, as to provide for themselves and their future progeny.

But to proceed with my Hull season, and not preach a sermon, I must recollect that Mrs. Hudson gained much *in the opinion of the audience; the vio-*

lent admiration of Mrs. King being much relaxed, as their golden opinion of that lady was changed to silver, for no other reason but because she had NOT been honoured with the same applause in Ireland as in Yorkshire, without recollecting she had there to encounter odious comparisons opposed to her, viz. Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Fitzhenry, and others—as a miser will judge of another's merit on learning what money Mr. Such-a-one is worth; for in the scale where the cash is put, he will be sure to pronounce there lies the sensitive part.

The whole winter at Hull, 1775, we had frequent commotions in our state, and afterwards at York, between Mrs. Hudson and Mrs. Montague; for the latter with her spirit and powers was daily gaining ground; and each had a party, which were distinguished by the appellation of *the Montagues* and *the Capulets*—like Whig and Tory.

I had about that time involved myself with the building of Leeds Theatre; and what with the infinite expence of new scenery and wardrobe, I judged it the most expedient mode to sell half the property, and be paid as manager and actor, by which means my mind would not be harrassed with any incumbrances. I had not published such a proposal a week, till the plan was adopted and filled with the most respectable names in York city: We met on the most friendly

terms, on an evening appointed for the purpose, to settle the final agreement,—when, as if some planet had unwitting men, we fell together by the ears, and never were friends again, and that only from one point, which on both sides at that time appeared to be very material: The subscribers allowed me full and uncontrollable power as Mr. Manager, but would not permit me to dispose of my own share of the property without the consent of all the subscribers. I declared I would be free as air;—but in that respect, though a theatrical king, yet I was to be at the disposal of the New Constitution or Convention, then to be established of the National Theatrical Assembly, who would not suffer *King Tate* to move from any of his palaces or summer villas without permission from the new assembled body. It is true I was better off in some respects than the late unfortunate *real* monarch of France, as I had in the year, the extent of the greatest part of York county to range in. However I would not yield up my liberty, and they were equally strenuous, and a numerous body opposed to my single self; they therefore one and all abandoned me to my fate, as an obstinate, headstrong, self-willed ignoramus, who did not deserve such friends. To be sure they puzzled me, for I wanted Three Thousand Guineas, and had no resource, but then John Bull had his liberty, and was not made a cap-

tive;—And the sound of the word liberty pleases the idea, the same as Boniface is delighted when he hears Latin; for though he acknowledges he does not understand it, yet he says he loves its sound. And this chaining me to the oar contained more compliment than perhaps the stranger, as a reader, may be aware of; and he will be surprised when I proudly assure him, notwithstanding I was in debt, yet my integrity was so esteemed and truly to be depended upon, and the opinion of my doing every thing for the entertainment of the town, that they actually valued me as a manager, on an equality almost worth the purchase they were intending to make, and that after I had been as Manager for several years. It certainly was and is a most flattering compliment for me to reflect on, and to relate to the world at large, as an incontrovertible fact: However we parted, and each party determined;—that is, on their parts they would not hazard their money, unless I was bound to it; and on the other, Mr. Pet Tate would not submit to controul.

I went on to the Hull season; no new matter that I now recollect. Two or three of the proprietors pushed me hard for their money, by which I was much pricked and goaded, and was so irritated, that I offered the Theatres for sale, in the London papers, and what is very

strange for so large and established a property, I received no adequate offers. Indeed the reader will recollect it was then the beginning of the American war, and the theatric merchants, and indeed more principal ones in a general way, felt a decline of trade, consequently a consumption in pocket. Something was necessary to be done, and I obtained another set of subscribers, who permitted me to have the right of sale as to my own property in the Theatre. A person, (Mr. Buck) was appointed as treasurer for each party, and I was to be uncontrollable as Manager. This mutual agreement was put into immediate execution at York, in January 1776. All was harmony—we failed before the wind—such a Manager, and such friends as the proprietors, were not to be matched!

January 18, a young lady was recommended by Mr. Maude of York, to play three or four nights, whose name was DAVIES: She acted Cherry, Miss Biddy, and Cupid in the Trip to Scotland, and was much approved. I believe the young lady was not then above 14 years of age, but since that time has been better acquainted with the world, men, and things, as Mrs. Wells.

Mr. Fletewood in the month of February fell suddenly into a rapid decline, and very little hopes were entertained of his recovery, and as his frequent and sudden indispositions rendered the en-

tertainments of the Theatre very precarious, I engaged a Mr. BEYNON, whom I had seen the summer before at the Glasgow Theatre: He was the son of an eminent ribon-weaver at Coventry; had a great share of spirit, and did not want his own good opinion. I am told he has improved, and is now a Manager in Warwickshire. He was of great service to me in my emergency; for Flete-wood grew daily worse and worse: His last appearance on any stage, was at York, on Saturday, March 23, 1776, for his own benefit, when he acted Mr. Drummond, in Mrs. Cowley's "Run-away."

On April 9, Easter Tuesday, I produced what is called to this day, "Wilkinson's Duenna." Having given an account of that production in my Memoirs, I will not here trouble the reader on that subject. That evening Mrs. THOMSON (Mrs. Vernon) made her appearance in the Pantomime of "The Genii," as Diana, and sung the excellent song of "With horns and with hounds, I'll waken the day," &c. I need not add with applause, as she must be well remembered by all amateurs, as often singing that song with repeated plaudits and encores at Covent-Garden Theatre, about twenty-five years since, in Apollo and Daphne.

Mrs. Thomson brought in her hand her niece, Miss POITIER, who afterwards was married to

Mr. Johnstone, now of Covent-Garden Theatre, an excellent singer and actor, particularly in Irish characters. Miss Poitier had an elegant person, an enchanting pipe, and was truly a charming singer:—London has an unknown loss by the death of that delightful girl; there could not have been the smallest doubt of her success, had the tyrant Death permitted her to live. She acted at York that spring, Leonora, Venus, Maid of the Mill, &c. &c. to excellent houses, and with unbounded applause, and her aunt assisted in the opposite parts—Arbaces to her Mandane,—Fanny the Gipsy, to her Maid of the Mill, &c. They had been engaged at Manchester, with Mr. Younger, but it was the custom at that time to close the Theatre there at Easter till the Whitfun-week, which is always the race-week there.

Mrs. Hitchcock was with me, but was engaged for Bath; and though she was to leave me at the end of May, she could not bear the thoughts of a rival. It is the natural ambition of almost every performer's mind, that notwithstanding his or her departure is their own act and deed, yet they want their loss to be so severely felt, that any person starting up to please the public in their particular department, is what we call *death upon the cross*. So Mrs. Hitchcock was very angry with me for engaging Miss Poitier, and perceiving she got much applause in her favourite cha-

ractions, I well remember she rated me soundly on the occasion ; told me, that not having any humanity myself, I could not feel for the injuries I cruelly inflicted on others—for with a burst of tears and many dropping beads, she said—“ You “brute of a manager ! why you never had any “merit as an actor yourself, or if you had, it was “only gleaned from others, and not any of your “own !”—then thanked her stars that she was leaving me, and would never see York again if she lived an hundred years ;—that is, if I was manager. Her handkerchief was more bedewed with real tears, than all her acted sorrows ever produced ;—She spoke then what she thought ;—she said she was going to a gentleman, Mr. Palmer at Bath, and there she would continue for life. But words are but wind ; and when she reads this, my good friend, Mrs. Hitchcock, will laugh heartily, and she will freely confess, (to speak the truth) when she made her *narration*, she was in a *bloody* passion, and it did her a vast deal of good, the giving it the manager rarely : And surely take us for all in all, we are the strangest, as well as the *merriest* undone people in the universe. I ever liked Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock, and their whole family. These threats only served to make us more cordial at our after meetings, with which the reader will hereafter be made acquainted.

Mr. Powell and Mr. Wood (who had left me the year before, and of whom I have given a particular account) came also from Manchester to York, during the vacation : The one sung and the other acted.

On Saturday May 10, 1776, Mr. Earby the prompter (who was and is happy enough to enjoy independency) was to have his benefit. The play was *The Rivals*, Mrs. Montague, whose spirit it was impossible to tame, and one whom the terrors of the audience, or the frowns of the manager, when in her flights, neither could subdue, acted the part of Lydia Languish : By some accident a little scene was omitted, and as the quarrelling scene was going on between Sir Lucius and Acres, it was impossible to recede ; Mrs. Montague's spirit had caught fire, and like Etna's flames, not all the water-engines in York would have had any effect to have cooled her courage, for every effort to persuade her to go on the stage and give the proper conclusion to the play, was only like oil thrown upon flames to make her burn the fiercer. The audience called for me, and insisted on her making an apology ;—however she took her chair, wished audience, manager, players, and all at the devil. In consequence the audience determined whenever she appeared again to shew their authority and power, after such insolent behaviour.

Powell's benefit was to be on Tuesday, May 13, when Edward the Black Prince was revived,—the part of Ribemont by Mr. Younger, who offered his services as the Manchester manager for his friend's benefit. If attraction had depended on size, my friend Younger's "fair round belly, with fat capon lined," would have been a powerful loadstone; he was in truth very unwieldy, and when the dying scene came on, and Mr. Younger, as the warrior Ribemont, expired, his prominence, as he laid on his back, was not a *little hill* but a mountain of flesh, his head was quite lost to the view of all the spectators, and he looked like the decapitated King in the 5th act of the Mourning Bride. The whimsical novelty of the sight, threw young and old ladies of quality and of no quality, the grave as well as the gay, into such convulsive and irresistible peals of laughter, as rung the walls of mirth, shaking all sides of the Theatre,—every attempt to finish the play, proved abortive, and the curtain never dropped with more applause.

I must relate, however, that if our tragedy ended like a comedy, it began with great solemnity, for Amazonian Montague, I verily believe would have withdrawn her services for the fair Princess Mariana she was to represent in Edward the Black Prince, but Younger being a manager, policy made her consider, that if she offended

him and prevented his acting Ribemont, she would never stick knife in pudding of his (and he was a great epicure) nor draw a tragedy dagger on his boards, should she ever want an engagement, otherwise with all her valor, I believe she would not have taken the field to give the audience battle.

Mr. Earby, whose benefit was the Saturday previous to this awful Tuesday, when the riot and rumpus happened, had published the following hand-bill——

YORK, May 10, 1776.

TO THE PUBLIC.

“MR. EARBY, PROMPTER at the THEATRE-ROYAL, is extremely sorry that he has been (though quite unintentionally) in some measure the cause of the audience being offended on Tuesday last; he hopes every person will think him incapable of wishing to have the minutest article of that evening’s entertainment omitted. It was his interest, as well as his duty, to contribute every thing in his power to render the whole as pleasing as possible to those numerous friends who then honoured him with their presence.

“He begs leave to lay before the public the following REAL state of the affair:——

“In the hurry of business he undesignedly gave orders too soon for changing the scenery and

“wings, which occasioned the omission of a *short*
“scene, in which Mrs. HITCHCOCK, Mrs. COL-
“LINS, and Mr. COLBY were interested, as well
“as Mrs. MONTAGUE. He acknowledges
“that Mrs. MONTAGUE mentioned the cir-
“cumstance to him, *but not till after* the scenery
“was altered, and he was then afraid it was too
“late to recede, without making more confusion
“than the total omission of the scene in question
“would occasion. During the time Mr. DEATH
“and Mr. OWENSON were on the stage, almost
“every person in the company were intreating
“her to take no notice of what had happened,
“and thereby avoid the disagreeable circum-
“stances that succeeded.

“Whether Mrs. MONTAGUE chose a proper
“method of resenting the injury he inadvertently
“had done her; and whether her conduct on the
“stage afterwards, was agreeable to that respect
“which is due to an audience, the public are best
“able to judge. He, however, must desire per-
“mission to observe, that if performers in general
“were to notice, in the same manner, every
“omission or mistake, which any of them may
“commit, and which should be rather hid than
“exposed to an audience, the theatre, from being
“one of the most polite and rational amusements,
“would become the seat of disorder and confu-
“sion.”

When the play was to begin, there was a great tumult, the curtain that had been drawn up, was obliged to be let down, "Montague" and "Pardon" was the universal shout. I led the princess on the stage, taking fast hold of her trembling lily white hand, and her white handkerchief, displayed with dignity as a flag of truce; but with all the courtesies, weeping, and bowing, it was for some time a scene of confusion:—"Off, off!" "Go on!" "Pardon, pardon," &c. At length silence was obtained, she confessed her errors, sued for a pardon, and obtained it, was well received in the play, and I do not believe she contradicted me, or called me *the devil* for a month; and when she was pleased, was willing to oblige, be cheerful and happy in the extreme; frequently the case with people of strong passions.

A little fracas in the spring 1751, relative to Miss Falkner I will here mention; the fact was simply this:—She (Miss Falkner) asked Barry to play Hastings for her, which he very cheerfully promised to do: His name was accordingly printed; he afterwards retracted that promise,—what reason he assigned, or whether any, I cannot recollect: She continued his name in the bill to the very last, in spite of repeated forbiddances,—Mr. Rich, who did not love Barry, encouraged her: On the night of performance she went on before the play, and read a prose address to the

audience, written, I believe, by Mr. Donaldson, recounting the story, and recommending Lacy to their protection, with these concluding words,—
“He merits most, who studies most to please.”

Mr. Wood in the spring 1776, was returned from Manchester, to continue once more as a settled performer for the year. Mr. Owenfon had engaged for Dublin, and was to leave me in June, at the expiration of his article. Artaxerxes was revived for Mrs. Thomson's benefit: I unfortunately gave the part of Rimenès to Mr. Owenfon, who expected Artaxerxes, which I had allotted to Mr. Wood; Mr. Owenfon and I had been on the most friendly terms till that supposed affront of mine occurred: He behaved so haughtily on the occasion, and insisted on a challenge if I persisted, that I really did expect something serious must happen, and the world have sustained irreparable loss. I imparted my sentiments on that important occasion to my friendly confidant, Charles Wood, who, to prevent any excuse on my part, if called to an honourable account, provided plenty of powder and ball, and with such ammunition he well-filled a pair of large pistols, which are to this day in my possession.

Owenfon however cooled and left me well prepared for the field of honour for two years after, when the pistols being wanted in a hurry for the stage, I lent them for Mat o' the Mint in

the Beggar's Opera, and on seeing them on the stage, felt a sudden palpitation for fear of accident, as I instantly recollected the dangerous state they were in as *play-things*, and never was more happy than when I got behind the scenes and secured the charge prepared, and had them instantly fired off.

So many accidents happen yearly in every town and village, as should not only be a general caution to mankind, but particularly on the stage, not only as to fire-arms, but more so as to swords. Actors too frequently (against all caution, experience, and observation) will let a real sword, hanger, or broad-sword be trusted within their grasp, and when in the heat of action they either forget the real danger, or are panic struck, and retreat where they should advance with vigor.

In the summer 1776 Mr. and Mrs. MIELL joined me: he as an actor,—the lady as a singer. She had a powerful voice, but not a temper that in harmony delighted. Mr. Miell had a good understanding, education, and observation; was bred to the law. He is now manager of the Worcester and Wolverhampton theatres, which he conducts I am informed with credit to himself, and satisfaction to his auditors.

ROSIGNOL performed his imitation of birds some nights at York, warranted by his having

performed several nights the winter before at Covent-Garden Theatre.

Three weeks previous to York races I tried the town of Halifax for three weeks, which paid my expences, but our theatre was a dreadful place, being over the stables at the White Lion in that town. I expected whenever a regular theatre was built there, I should have been favoured with the preference,—but I was not so honoured.

At the races at York, in August 1776, Mr. and Mrs. MATTOCKS engaged for a few nights: Her first appearance was on Saturday, August 17, when she acted Charlotte in *The Hypocrite*, and *The Musical Lady*.—Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks acted Macheath and Polly;—Amiens and Rosalind,—Jaques, Mr. Wilkinson;—Lionel and Clarissa,—Wilkinson Colonel Oldboy, &c.

After the races Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks performed three or four nights at Leeds. The inhabitants of that town were so little theatrically inclined then, and in the autumn, that one of the evenings when Mrs. Mattocks was to perform a principal character, the house being very *dismal*, I agreed with Mrs. Mattocks to dismiss the very few who had honoured us with their company, when Mr. Mattocks came running and said a dismissal must not be thought of, such a rush of

company had made way into the pit;—which rush actually consisted of two women in red cloaks, and a sailor with a bottle and glass in his hand, to cheer his ladies spirits, if our *make-game* (as such persons term us) should affect the nerves of his ladies.

Mrs. Mattocks made me a compliment of her performance at Wakefield, on Saturday Sept. 7, 1776, which was the first night of performing in the new theatre of that pleasant town and neighbourhood:—The play was *The Beggar's Opera*, Macheath and Polly, Mr. and Mrs. Mattocks, with the *Musical Lady*, that character by Mrs. Mattocks. The race-week followed, and the new theatre was greatly attended;—Mr. Earle of Benningbrough, near York, was steward, and on a visit at Sir John Smyth's near Wakefield. The *Hypocrite* and the *Author* was acted on Saturday September 14: Every part of the evening's entertainment went off with such eclat as occasioned that truly well-bred gentleman, his lady and party, to stand up, bow, courtesy, &c. by way of approbation for their good entertainment. I was so puffed up with conceit and vanity, that I looked on myself as firmly seated in the opinion of box, pit, and gallery of my new theatre,—but after sunshine comes a storm.

On Sunday the 15th of September I gave a dinner at the Black Bull, to some friends, and the

whole company. The banquet was good and plentiful: Success to the Theatre, and the healths of the worthy inhabitants of Wakefield were drank in large libations, and nothing cross happened between the cup and the lip, though the cup and the lip frequently encountered each other; but each repetition was in a friendly, not a hostile manner. It grew towards night, yet all was well—neither scandal nor bickerings, either with the manager, players, or individuals disturbed our social board, nor did any hostile invasion interrupt our mutual felicity; and I felt as grand, and breathed as high as the flattered Alexander the Great at his banquet (which by the bye was the play appointed for the Monday night following) when lo! in all our calm, an unexpected storm arose, which had nearly set my famed Persepolis on fire; the particulars of which unfortunate circumstance were precisely as follow—

But I will beg permission first to observe, that in London, when Mrs. Bellamy was insulted purposely by the Countess of Coventry, in the character of Juliet. The audience unanimously supported their own consequence and respect, nor suffered Mrs. Bellamy to proceed until the Countess of Coventry and her party quitted the stage-box. It is very different indeed in the country, as there performers are looked on as entirely subservient and dependent. The most trifling offence to one

is immediately espoused by the whole, and the performer has very little chance for relief, unless he proclaims his humility and sorrow for offences past. For if any trades-people were seriously to interfere in the cause of the weak against the strong, they would be marked as objects of impertinence and indignation, and be discarded by what is called *the quality*, in their respective callings, and no more tea, sugar, or silks sent for or purchased from their respective shops.

I have known an instance of being engaged out to dinner when a disturbance had arose at the Hull Theatre, relative to a mistake about seats in the boxes, with the person whose benefit it was for, (Mr. Brown's) and I was not likely to know how the performer's places were let—it was and is certainly the box-keeper's business, and I hope ever will remain so, as I should be very unfit for it. However I was informed I had been hotly called, and a lady said the next day, that Wilkinson ought to ask pardon for not coming on the stage when called upon. The lady's name was Sherman, and who once I believe was a dresser at Drury-Lane Theatre. Nay, I have known it asked, if a riot in the gallery, or a performer had promised on their benefit, why I did not settle it, as if I was answerable for what the actor promises from himself in his benefit-bill:—Certainly it is

the actor's business entirely on such points, and he alone is the responsible person.

At Wakefield, about 18 years ago, I had encouragement to have a new Theatre built there, at a great expence, with an assurance of every support. It opened at the usual season, and was well supported and attended till the last week of playing. On a Sunday night, September 15, 1776, as I have lately mentioned, a gentleman in liquor happened to be in the bar of the Bull Inn, which was the time of my public dinner, when Mr. Murray (a gentleman of family, and an excellent actor, now at Bath,) happened to be there; and I suppose from some wrong, or slight offence before given—as I would hope that no gentleman, unprovoked, could behave in so unbecoming a manner,—the *gentleman* ordered the waiter to turn the *player* out of the bar; this produced a quarrel; and I dare say both were wrong, and warm with the juice of the grape when they proceeded to blows. The Monday night after the play, some gentlemen acquainted with the *aggressor*, not only came themselves, but sent for some gentlemen 30 miles distant, to banish the manager, and shut up the theatre, for an offence that had been committed at the tavern.—Good God! what is it a player had not better be, if such acts of power were often put in practice! Had Mr. Murray given any offence in his profession on the

stage, that certainly was the place to decide, and to acquit or condemn. But if quarrels in taverns, or in private, are to be brought against the player at the theatre, (allowing the player ever so culpable) it undoubtedly is an overbearing act, void of sense, reason, and every considerate good quality. I was called on for Mr. Murray to instantly come on the stage, and ask public pardon for having affronted a gentleman. Mr. Murray would not come when he was called; for he looked upon himself, he said, as the injured person;—and as to asking pardon he certainly never would do so, and thereby degrade himself. I was then called upon to dismiss Mr. Murray immediately:—That I declared (and with truth) was not in my power, as Mr. Murray was under article to me, with a severe penalty attending the breach of that article; but that unless the gentlemen could settle the business to their satisfaction, Mr. Murray should not appear on the stage at Wakefield again. The riot lasted from nine o'clock to near one, as those gentlemen would not suffer the farce to go on:—Nor did it end here, as I thought it would have done, for Mr. Justice Zouch, one of the most sensible, learned, and truly respectable gentlemen in the kingdom, and to whom I own myself greatly indebted for the very polite and kind attention which he at that time conferred, and for which I here desire to make my grateful acknow-

ledgments; that gentleman took the trouble of sending for my Patenteeship, and Mr. Murray, before a numerous set of gentlemen to the White Hart, where every method was used to win or compel Murray to ask pardon, which he had the spirit to refuse. The house of correction was then genteelly mentioned for me as well as the rest, as infringing on the Act of Parliament. Justice Zouch observed, that as Patentee of York, I certainly could not be committed as a vagrant, having a settled habitation; and he hoped Mr. Murray would think better of it. But will it not appear more strange to add, that the evil did not cease there; for the plays were almost neglected the remaining nights of the season; and several leading gentlemen did not come to Wakefield the year following, nor was there any gentlemen who would then act as stewards: And to make bad worse, there were not any assemblies or place of resort for that fashionable and elegant neighbourhood: So I lost the steward's play, the ladies' play of the assembly, besides the other nights were to a certainty hurt; and I suffered that loss and injury because there had been a dispute between a gentleman of Wakefield and a gentleman of the stage.

In losing Mr. Murray by this matter, the public lost an actor of great merit and value; and this certainly was a deprivation of entertainment.

to the public. It is generally supposed by gentlemen who inflict and pronounce banishment on the deserted player, that *begging* is to be the consequence; but Providence is not so neglectful of his meanest children,—he “caters for the sparrow, and doth the raven feed:” And if the actor has merit, whenever he feels himself ill-treated he will find a world elsewhere.

Country Managers are liable to censures, which the *London* Managers are *not* entirely exempt from, for they too often incur mortifications. And in this general review of Theatres, I trust no liberal mind can be offended; for if even a glance of truth is not *permissible*, particular situations, could not be explained; for no man but fears somebody, or ought so to do.

It is hard to be condemned as Manager, for presenting the public with a piece at a time when it is in vogue in London; yet at York and Hull I have been too often the topic of abuse for giving such pieces: “The Follies of a day” was one—“The Spanish Barber” another. Notwithstanding they were got up with every preparation, they did not suit the humours of the audience, therefore I was blamed, which certainly tho’ the fate of place, yet is very irksome, and occasions inconceivable uneasiness, besides the expence and disappointment. For the reason given for displeasure is of all the most irritating, which is, “that

Mr. Manager must intend to affront when he dares offer such a comedy or tragedy for public representation." Were the Manager the author, then indeed such allegations would be just; but merely as conductor it is widely different; for my bad judgment may greatly relish one play that the audience may utterly, with propriety, disapprove; and if a piece has a run in London, it is a common expression to say, "Mr. Wilkinfon, "what are you about—you have bad business—"why don't you act pieces that are playing in "London; they would fill your houses?" I do not mean to insinuate by this, that every audience should not judge for themselves, or admire, because it is fashionable in London—quite the contrary: For in many instances I applaud the judgments of those who decide for themselves, and who do not let the name of London deprive them of their senses. But the Manager is, in such a point, certainly out of the question, and should be held blameless. For surely, if I go to the expence that other Managers do, to get up a new piece, so far I am not only excusable but praiseworthy. As to myself I am content with disapprobation, but am hurt with anger; yet I look on it not as error, but as my indispensable duty to produce whatever has a run, and is honoured by repeated approbation. "The Word to the Wife" was damned in London; but it was at

Hull and York well received, then at Bath, where it basked in sunshine, while that insipid fashion for dull sentimental comedy continued; but it is now, for the relief of audiences and actors, exploded. I recollect a benefit of mine, at York, some years since, was honoured with a crowded audience, (as I for many years have been) and feel that compliment with every sense of gratitude and acknowledgment, whether at York, Hull, or any other Theatre where I have been so highly favoured with a brilliant audience. I at some trouble and expence procured the Sequel to the Poor Soldier, called "Patrick in Prussia." The reception in the Metropolis not only warranted my giving this farce for my night—but as Mr. O'Keefe was the author, I adorned it with new scenery and dresses; and truly from its London credit and considerable run, I had expectations of its future services to repay me. Poor Patrick's fate was not willing he should preserve that fame in the North which he had in the South; for the next day after the representation, a gentleman of York, a constant friend to the Theatre, and to whom I have often been obliged, and who has held the highest office in York, met me in the street, and asked me how long I intended to try the patience of the York audience by insult, without being called strictly to account for offering "Love in a Camp" to an audience of such con-

sequence? I urged how repeatedly it was well received in London. He tartly replied—London suffering such stuff was no reason; for certainly I must have read the farce, and if so, I should have known it was unfit for representation, either to be seen or heard. Yet I can assure the reader every justice was done to the piece,—and to my great surprise, when I saw that farce the February following, 1787, when it was commanded by his Majesty, after Mrs. Inchbald's new comedy of "Such Things Are," I was surprised, delighted, and astonished at the perpetual applause and peals of laughter and approbation with which it was received, and said to myself I should never have expected to have been forgiven if I had not offered that farce to any of my audiences after seeing its great reception before the eye of Majesty. Not that I mean or wish to be understood, that *that* was worthy praise which the York audience disapproved, or that the general opinion in London was wrong or right. Indeed Poor Patrick met the like disapprobation at Hull; and I declared if Patrick should rise from the dead, it would be strange and unexpected, but not at any expence of mine; but time keeps a fluctuating show-glass, and is ever shifting to the view. It certainly is a hard lot attendant upon Managers: *And, reader, note, that hereby hangs a theatrical tale.*

In losing Mr. Murray in consequence of the riot, I lost an excellent actor: And it certainly was carrying the matter too far to attempt such a degradation to a person born a gentleman, and of such credit to his profession. Lady Armitage sent her compliments for me, to drink tea at Sir John Smyth's, that week of confusion—She seemed truly affected at the unlucky circumstance, particularly as the matter originated from a cause wherein the Theatre had *not* any concern. Her Ladyship bespoke a play, on the Friday, Sept. 20, 1776, which occasioned a genteel and quiet audience. Indeed the inhabitants one and all were violent in their wishes for the Theatre, and in their attachment to Mr. Murray; and had it not been for that body shewing a determination to preserve the playhouse and actors from injury, I do not think it would have ended so well as it did.

But here is a lesson that we should never be secure of happiness from appearances; for on the Saturday I opened my Theatre with every appearance of success and enviable patronage: On the Monday, without any cause on my part, my popularity was gone, and those whom I had looked up to as my supporters, became my inveterate foes for that time, and all my fair expectations of a golden harvest were blasted. I do not mean that any one of those gentlemen continued lasting

enemies, or even at that instant meant to do me material injury, but pride, power, and sudden anger made them violent at that juncture, which threw as much indignity on me and my company, and dwelt on our minds as strong, as Alonzo's blow did on the soul of Zanga. However it was two years before the races and company returned to the former channel of peace and plenty.

I closed Wakefield Theatre on Saturday, September 21, in quiet, and opened the new Theatre at Doncaster, on Monday, September 23, 1776* ; and a very pretty elegant Theatre it then was and now is : Of course the novelty of the Theatre, and the numerous attendance at the races, made it a fashionable place of resort. But the assembly-rooms keep the ladies entirely away, the three race nights, which are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday ; on Friday the town is thinned, though the Stewards' play is on that night, and on Saturday every body is quite tired out.

Now at Wakefield the races are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday ; Thursday the town is full, Friday is the Steward's play, and the Saturday is under the sanction of the Queen of the Assembly ; by which excellent mode (*to my thinking*), the Theatre is under the immediate support of the public every night in the week.

* The Doncaster Theatre was built under the direction of the friendly Alderman Rickard.

At Doncaster the boxes are well filled the race nights, by the great number of gentlemen of fashion, who attend that meeting; and for nobility, and genteel families, it is at present the first attended place of sport in the county of York.

York used to boast superiority to any in the kingdom, but now is more dependant upon gentlemen, which in the end makes the Theatre fully as beneficial, as if more families came; for the rooms (which used to boast of 5 or 600 annual subscribers) now cannot open with success for more than two nights; in consequence, I am honoured with general support; to deserve which, I never spare for any expence to purchase novelty and merit for the entertainment of my valuable and much esteemed guests.

About the season at Doncaster, 1776, Mr. Suett was making rapid strides as to improvement, and gaining public favour. Mr. Robertson, the Yorkshire Edwin, began to feel the effects of age, and talked of retiring, which afforded Suett an ample field, as the veteran then gave up many characters to serve and forward that young actor.

Mr. CUMMINS was also engaged that season: He made his first appearance, under my management, on Thursday, October 10, 1776, in the character of Horatio, in the Fair Penitent. Mr. Cummins has an excellent and powerful voice,

an expressive, handsome, manly countenance, with a good person, retentive memory, and great stage merit. He has done me much honour and credit, by a friendly behaviour, ever attached to the interest of me and mine; strict in his payments, a good husband, father, and friend, and is held in great esteem by every one,—I may add of every degree. This is a boast much for the credit of the profession, and also a strict truth.

Man and wife being one flesh, I need *not* be lavish or fulsome on account of Mrs. Cummins; but for fear those who do not know her, may think she is not intitled to praise, I can aver she has merit as an actress, is of good person, a prudent sensible woman, and what is better, a good wife and a good mother. Mr. Cummins's performance of Lord Davenant is excellent; his pronouncing "I hope so too," is truly meritorious, and would not disgrace the first actor on any stage.

Mr. WHEELER was engaged that year, in the Hull season, as a singer and actor: He made his first appearance at Hull, in Macheath, Thursday, November 10; his second part was Jaffier.

Mr. Cummins made his bow on Monday, Oct. 21, 1776, in Alexander; and has from that time stood in the first estimation as an actor and a gentleman.

Mr. Wheeler only continued the Hull and York seasons. He went to Portsmouth, where he was for some seasons Manager of that Theatre; first I believe as deputy to Mr. Mattocks, then for himself: It was during the American war; and I am informed he obtained a sufficiency to retire and live comfortably.

Miss SIMPSON, daughter of Mr. Simpson, late of Drury-Lane Theatre, (now departed this life for a better) was engaged. She had some promise, played Sylvia in Cymon, with a degree of approbation, a year or two after she left me. But whether from want of application, the want of encouragement from the manager, or from the public, or from her own neglect, she sunk into obscurity, from which she never returned, nor do I know whether she ever became mistress, wife, widow, or old maid, nor whether she is living or dead.

Mrs. Montague at Hull, 1776, was got into high favour, the which did not lessen her indignation rising against Mrs. Hudson; nor did the spleen of the latter decrease against her rival opponent. Mrs. Hudson's benefit was appointed the last night in the season at Hull, Friday, Jan. 3, 1777:—The play was Mr. Hull's tragedy of Henry the II.—Rosamond, Mrs. Hudson; the Queen, Dame Montague. This was so repug-

nant to that Lady's inclination, that she fulked, and would not study the part: When the play was to begin, an apology was made—that "Illness had prevented Mrs. Montague from studying the part of Queen Elenor, and she begged to read it." Hudson's friends were instantly inflamed, indeed the whole audience said, "Mrs. Montague must appear and account for her conduct;" at last, after a continued uproar and confusion, on went the Queen Elenor in a rage,—"*Who's afraid!*"—She said she *would* read it, she could *not* play the part;—illness, study for her own benefit, &c. had prevented her. They, with one voice, unanimously told her, if she did not do the part, as was her duty, and of which she had had timely notice, she must depart that instant; for rather than submit to such intentional insult and effrontery, they would desire the *cook-wench* from the first ale-house to read it—on which, she placed herself in an attitude of tragedy, and having obtained a minute's truce—said aloud,—“So I may not be permitted to read the Queen?” “No, no, no!—Off, off, off!”—“Well then,” says she, “curse you all!” She then threw the book into the pit, and made her exit amidst shouts of disgrace, but not entirely without laughter, from such as smiled at the tumult, and enjoyed the storm; for such a strange whimsical accident perhaps never occurred before or since

in theatrical annals, either in Great Britain or Ireland, and most likely not in any kingdom whatever.

Though the season ended with a whimsical riot, yet it concluded the year so much to the satisfaction of my fellow proprietors, that I was in greater favour with those gentlemen the January 1777, than the January 1776. Pleased with their interest, pleased with their purchase, and all the agreeable *et ceteras*; but all that golden vision, like most others, was merely so, it was all the shadow of a shade.

York winter season, 1777, I received a letter from Mr. Digges, (as inserted in my Memoirs) requesting me to perform a few nights for him, as he was then in distressed circumstances, wanted assistance, and depended on me. In order that I might not be missed at York, and depending on novelty being much better, I engaged Mr. Ross, who was not only an actor of real merit, and a gentleman in behaviour, but had the stamp of a London audience to insure his reception: However it so happened that the audience were not pleased, or would not be pleased,—which amounts to much the same thing in regard to public caprice; the York Theatre was deserted, he could not please in any characters, so as to attract, and acted his highly approved King Lear for his benefit, to a receipt of 28l. His first night at

York, was Essex, on Saturday, February 22, 1777; then Lord Townly, Jaffier, Othello, Oakley, and Horatio.

While Mr. Ross was at York, I was playing the following characters at Edinburgh:—First night, Monday the 10th of February, Zanga—afterwards Colonel Oldboy, Lord Ogleby,—Bayes, (in which character I always drew an audience at that city)—Ironfides, with Major Sturgeon,—Don Manuel with the Lyar,—King Richard—The Nabob, with Razor (the Barber), and the Commissary. Saturday, March 1, my benefit—*my* Duenna, in which I acted Don Jerome, after which gave Tea, and acted Cadwallader to a brilliant and crowded audience,—seven rows of the pit being filled by ladies of the first distinction. Be it observed, that at Edinburgh, pit and boxes are the same price.

Monday, March 3, I finished my pleasurable as well as profitable trip, with repeating the same opera of the Duenna, and Mr. Foote's characters in his Devil upon two Sticks. I returned from Edinburgh against our York assizes, which week was remarkably well attended.

Mr. Ross acted Sir Charles Easy on the Tuesday. Unluckily for me and Mr. Ross, he had not come to the appointed night he was advertised for at York;—the gout and laziness (for which he was remarkable) had kept him back, and when he

thought to secure increased curiosity and a wish to see him, he lost all hold; for on his appearing gouty, and being grown purfy in person, the audience shrunk from him, and being in an ill humour with me for going to Edinburgh, they would *not* approve the dish I had ordered before them; and Mr. Ross at that time had *not* the fashion of London in his favour sufficient to command approbation.

I look upon all these kind of adventures and incidents like old tales that please the teller in the recital. I do not repeat these occurrences or any of my disappointments as grievances, but when over, reflect on them as matter for observation; for what we often think misfortunes which lead to ruin, tend often to the contrary effect; and what we deem good, turn out unexpectedly the reverse. I have sometimes believed that, all things considered, my broken leg was *not* an unfortunate circumstance; and if after all my illness, pain, anxiety, and fixed lameness, I can be thus truly reconciled, I think no one will envy my content, but allow me to be heartily welcome to such philosophy, as a second Pangloss.

Signior Rossignol was engaged for a few nights at York; also Ferzi and others, with Richer from Sadlers Wells; they and family were much approved. Ferzi had a great house on the Friday

In the Assize-week, though the appointed night always at the concert for all the world to be there.

At that time Mrs. Hull sent a young lady by the name of HOLMES, to make a trial of her stage talents. She was about 18, and I fixed on Miss Aubrey with the epilogue, which she performed on Thursday, March 13, 1777, with great neatness and much promise, which she has since proved; and it is her own fault she is not much better.

I have not passed over many lines since I gave an account of Mrs. Montague's riot at Hull, and have now another to mention: But in that affair she was by no means to blame. Rosignol was engaged by her to perform for her benefit on Saturday, March 22, 1777: The play was "Sir Thomas Overbury"—the farce, "The Male Coquet," in which she acted Sophia. Rosignol sent word to the Theatre that he was very ill, and could *not* stir out; such information was given to the audience, but they would not admit of the apology; they hissed Mrs. Montague off the stage, accused her of trick, would not hear any vindication from her, but violently insisted on Rosignol. I myself went to his lodgings, told him the confusion that was going forward at the Theatre, and by entreaty prevailed on him to follow me. Whilst I was gone in search of the warbler,

I was informed that I had been violently called for. On Rosignol's going on, all was "Hush every breeze," and when he attempted to give the notes of the wild lark, &c. it was so evident that the man was really ill and incapable, pity subdued anger, and he was dismissed with universal consent. The farce then proceeded, but Madam Montague was so piqued at the very ignominious manner, she had been treated, that she withdrew her services from the Theatre, vowing never to return to that stage again.

The reader will certainly think the audience were harsh to the lady; but the true reason was, as she was known to be often in broils and often ill, they doubted her veracity; and my not appearing when called for, naturally popped me into the same disgrace with Montague: For the audience are too apt to be ready to disapprove the Manager—(Mr. Garrick has *not* escaped)—for the public are led to imagine a Manager does not do his duty and wish to please; and the Manager, from being often galled, is also too apt to wince, and think the public are never to be satisfied——

— "Vain his attempt who strives to please them all,"

The Easter Tuesday following Mrs. Montague's Vesuvian Eruption was not subdued on my

benefit, though my Duenna, which had served me a few weeks before at Edinburgh and at York, in 1776, also for the yearly round, was again appointed for my night at York, 1777, so on April 1, when I made my appearance, I received, by way of welcome, several marks of disapprobation: I could not account for it, but had it explained, that it was for my not appearing when called on when the disturbance happened at Mrs. Montague's benefit. These things are strange, but too often an opportunity for venting spleen is so very agreeable to our own natures, that we snatch at it, and think power too delicious a morsel, to lose a moment in inquiring after the fact; for then fun and authority would be lost, and that *we* are all too fond of—I impertinently say *we*, from a full conviction I never had, have, or shall have fewer errors than my neighbours, superiors, or my inferiors, but too much of the contrary, and am sorry for it.

In April 1777, I prepared Mr. Mason's *Character*, for Mr. Suett's benefit: The music of Covent-Garden was not published, and Suett, with the assistance of the ingenious Mr. Shaw, (now leader at Drury-Lane Theatre) introduced it with such a degree of decorum, that the author I am told (for I have not the honour of knowing Mr. Mason) was not only satisfied, but surprised at the performance. Mr. Mason himself I learn, from

very credible authority, approved of the representation. As to my own comprehension of the Ode, as Death, I will not answer, but I can say on my performance of the Ode, from the great gifted enthusiasm I conceitedly fancied that I possessed, I pleased myself; which on reflection, is far from having been always the case; and so far I am death's debtor for a prolongation of time, as is here verified *in facto*, in spite of stage expirings, and my death often announced in the newspapers.

The nights of Caractacus, Mr. Camidge jun. favoured me with the assistance of his harpsichord. He is a young gentleman of great ability, as a professor of music, and earnest in a study to behave well to every body. To say such good conduct and true merit will, or has secured the good opinion of all, would be perhaps saying too much; but in a general sense he abounds with friends: The musical gentlemen of the first consequence hold his talents in great esteem, and most people of worth are pleased to see so estimable a young man, acting with every success and encouragement, the which he is so truly deserving of from his uncommon diligence, propriety, and attention.

After Caractacus, Miss GLASSINGTON made her appearance at York, in Jane Shore, Saturday, April 26, 1777, but very unfortunately for Miss

Glassington, Mrs. SIDDONS was then the leader of theatrical fashion at Manchester, from whence intelligence moves quick to York. For though she had not obtained the London public voice, being rejected at Drury-Lane, (not very much to the credit of Mr. Garrick's judgment,) yet that truly intrinsic merit, that unquenchable flame of soul and spirit, prevented even London prejudice to hurt her in the opinion of country audiences: And London critics should consider that in large towns and cities, or places of public resort, men of learning, science, and discernment, must not only reside, but have perpetually the assistance of people of the great lead, who sanction in London,—as at Bath and York, during the public races and assizes, where the first people of the law, and of every rank, honour us with their company.

Now this said Mrs. Siddons (at the time Miss Glassington was to play on trial for an engagement at York) had engaged for the vacation from Easter to the races at Whitsuntide: Mr. Siddons was also retained for the said intermediate weeks. Mrs. Siddons's first appearance on the York stage, was on Tuesday, April 15, 1777, in the Grecian Daughter. I had the honour of being her old father, as *Evander*. Her state of health appeared to me so injured, (though I perceived every other requisite) that I actually trembled

from her apparent weakness, fearing she would never be able to sustain that fatiguing character with proper energy and spirit; and I must add, that the friends of Mrs. Hudson and others wished her not to succeed,—merely because she had *not* bore the bell in London. Our great critic, Mr. Swan, was one who took the lead; but she had no sooner performed Rosalind, Matilda, Alicia, Lady Townly, and Lady Alton, but all bowed to her shrine; and Mr. Swan was the foremost then in lavish praise: He indeed was ever guided by fashion and consequence. She also acted Indiana, the Irish Widow, Arpasia, and Horatia in the Roman Father; and likewise Semiramis for her own benefit on Saturday, May 17, when the York season finished.

I never remember so great a favourite, as a York actress, as Mrs. Siddons was in that short period:—Every one lifted their eyes with astonishment, that such a face, judgment, &c. could have been neglected by the London audience, and by the first actor in the world, (Mr. Garrick) as if not of sterling worth.

In her Arpasia, I recollect her fall and figure after the dying scene was noticed, as most elegant; nor indeed do I recognise such a mode of disposing the body in so picturesque and striking a manner as Mrs. Siddons does on such prostrate occasions. Great wishes were entertained at

York of her coming again as a resident actress; but her stars had ordained better for her;—she had only lowered a little, but was soon raised to the topmost height, as we all see and acknowledge. My best hopes of her return were founded on the finery I had promised—What lady likes it not? Mr. Younger's wardrobe was not very good or various, and by no means equal to mine at York; and indeed in that point I still vaunt that I am the tippy: For be it known to all men, that for Lady Alton, I decked Mrs. Siddons in a most elegant full sack, with a large hoop, (as then worn, and I am partial too for the stage) and that sack was really elegantly adorned with silver trimmings, &c. This struck her fancy so much, that she declared herself delighted, and laughingly used to repeat, she wished she could convey it with her to Manchester, it made her feel so happy. Were I to mention this to Mrs. Siddons, probably such a trifling matter may have escaped her volume of memory. I should *not* have ventured to have inserted it, had not Mrs. Wilkinson assured me that I am perfectly right. Indeed I am not deranged in that respect, however I may be failing in other insignificant points. At that time I can with truth boast, we had the pleasure of Mrs. Siddons's company almost constantly at my house, much to the satisfaction of Mrs. Wilkinson, myself, and my friends.

Mrs. Siddons *then said* she liked her country excursions, and the civilities she met with so well, and thought her treatment in London had been so cruel and unjust, she never wished to play there again. Her state of health did not, by any means, at that time, promise the power of such renovation, strength, and execution, as she now is so happy to possess: But her acting was well imagined then, though not attended to in London by any means as it ought to have been. Mr. Woodfall, who is certainly a good critic, and super-excellent observer, advised her not to think of a London Theatre, to which her powers were very inadequate, but keep to such little Theatres as she had been accustomed to, and where she might be heard. But O what a change did there happen! as Mrs. Siddons certainly for four or five years drew more money, not only in London, but in many distant Theatres in England, Ireland, and Scotland, than any actor or actress ever did, or perhaps ever will do, and at higher prices (Mr. Garrick not excepted).

On the close of York Theatre, 1777, I went as usual to Leeds, where I do not remember any thing worth the relating, but that Mrs. Hudson and I had quarrelled, when Mrs. Siddons was at York, and she was to leave me in September.

At the end of Leeds season I tried the PLACE called a *Theatre*, at Halifax, once more, and acted

over the old stable, and with good success; actually better receipts in that dreadful place than at that time I experienced at the large and opulent town of Leeds and its extensive and numerous neighbourhood.

It is very extraordinary to relate, that I did not know any one family at Halifax but by name, during the two summer visits at that town, therefore I have not any occasion here to enumerate my friends, or give thanks for courtesies.

Mrs. Bernard was engaged for the vacancy of the Bath and Bristol company, between the end of July and the middle of September. From some cause Mr. Bernard was not engaged, and I cannot at this time recollect to a certainty whether he was in the agreement at York or not, but I am inclined to believe the contrary: He since that time has arrived at good established reputation at Bath and Covent-Garden Theatres, and at present is manager of a company at Plymouth, where he is respected for his punctuality as manager, and for his merit as an actor, and is now re-engaged at Covent-Garden.

The race-week, 1777, Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkley performed Sir Harry Wildair and Lady Lurewell, on Saturday, August 16, afterwards Benedic and Beatrice, Ranger and Clarinda, Copper Captain and Estifania, Lord Ogleby and Fanny: On the Monday following the races, was "The

"Twelfth Night," and on Wednesday, August 27, "The Trip to Scarborough," for Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkley. Mrs. Hudson was allotted the character of Berinthia, but being truly mortified at Mrs. Bulkley and Mrs. Bernard's taking the lead all the previous week, and it being on the eve of her own fixed departure, she positively refused the part so late as the Tuesday, after having had it more than a week for the Wednesday following. I expostulated, and though I did not get the honour of a box on the ear, like the Earl of Essex, yet she really threw the part in my face, and I was obliged to the good offices of Mrs. Bernard, who read the character of Berinthia with great credit to herself, and triumph over the enraged lady, though Mrs. Hudson took every pains to insinuate her injuries;—an error performers are too apt to be led into from self-consequence and intentional injury. But persons of distinguished understanding in general, perceive too much the folly of performers and managers, to be a party concerned: They may wish well to one side more than the other, as human nature will give an inclination where the wish prevails, but understandings, however elevated in rank and fortune, will seldom like to quit the pure stream of affluence, ease, and splendor, to paddle in the clayey streams of a Theatre; therefore unpitied fell, and departed at that time, Mrs. Hudson; and for her bidding

adieu to a comfortable situation, she and Mr. Hudson had no one to blame but themselves; and that I have known by experience to be a most mortifying circumstance. For we all would wish to lay the fault of our conduct on our stars, our friends, the winds, the waves, or the weather, or in short to any thing, much rather than sign the dead warrant of error against dear self.

Mr. Dodd and Mrs. Bulkely's fame are not yet forgotten in their excellent performances of Sir Andrew Ague-Cheek, and Viola in the Twelfth Night. Mrs. Bernard was much approved of in the Irish Widow, that week, and in all her characters.

Wakefield followed York races in course, where a gentleman, now well known in the west of Yorkshire, of the name of VINCENT, made an engagement with me. I was in London the February preceding, when that gentleman made his *first* appearance at Drury-Lane Theatre, in the pleasing character of Dorilas the Shepherd, in Mr. Hill's translation from Voltaire, of the tragedy called "Merope."

A Mr. PILE, of Yorkshire, also made his appearance the same week at Covent-Garden Theatre, in the same character. Miss Young (now Mrs. Pope) was the Merope at Drury-Lane--Mrs. Jackson at Covent Garden. Mr. Vincent's reception was flatter-

ing, and indeed so deservedly, that I was violent in my encomiums; for, except deficiency in powers, (very excusable in a young performer, unacquainted with the mode and practice of a Theatre) yet taken for all in all, it was one of the best first performances I thought I ever witnessed.

Chance led me with Mrs. Wilkinson to visit London in the summer following, when I regaled my lady with a jaunt to view the spot of all spots, Richmond Hill, also Hampton Court, &c. which situation to me is ever pleasing, ever new,—the castle at Richmond was our castle; there I met with Mr. Jefferson, (my old acquaintance so often mentioned) who then was manager of that neat little Theatre; he insisted on me and Mrs. Wilkinson spending a day with him, and as he liked the good things of this world, and as Richmond affords every article that is good, (if well paid for) we had no reason to complain of our host or his want of excellent cheer and welcome. When the tea ceremony approached, the said Mr. Vincent made his appearance; I had once seen him before that meeting, in the winter in London. He was then more opposite in mode and mien to myself than at this time; for he was the pink of courtesy; pocket was seldom consulted, so elegance and ease could be purchased. After tea he informed us he kept a gondola for his health,

and daily practised an airing, by traversing in his boat on the lovely banks of the silver Thames, and imagined such a recreation to me and my party would be highly agreeable, to which we all assented with a nod of approbation, and Mr. Vincent ordered Tom Tug and partner to prepare their oars, though not of gold or silver, and to keep time for my Cleopatra to be conveyed half way to Hampton; we returned all safe near the King's Gardens, which we had before traversed with infinite delight. In one of those walks Mr. Vincent declared he had not any engagement, when the one at Richmond expired, and I, on my part, never entered into any one engagement more eagerly, as of his genius I really conceived an enthusiastic opinion: In consequence, early in September, the said Mr. Vincent came to Wakefield, and in the race-week performed the part of the love stricken Romeo, on Wednesday, Sept. 10, 1777. From what cause I cannot say, whether any accident had occurred, but so it certainly was, that he could not be heard in any part of that Theatre distinctly. He was sometimes confused by being imperfect, a fault that I conjecture his love of ease had led him into, for in that respect he was at that time a second David Ross, who was the Prince of negligence: If it was the defect of Nature it would have been a certain bar to his success, as no speech can have

its proper pointed force where the actor has to think of the words: For, if to find, they come too late for sense or effect when found. Mr. Vincent then tried Tyrrel in the Fashionable Lover; and it was agreed that his performance of Hamlet should determine whether a settled engagement should take place or not, which part he acted on Monday, September 22, 1777, at Doncaster Theatre; there the same fault of the deficiency of lungs appeared again, and no great credit in his adhering to Shakespear's text; which was the more deserving censure, as his understanding was then naturally strong and very comprehensive, and those good qualities were aided by observation and a liberal education. His understanding, from *Necessity*, that mother of invention, has been indebted for much improvement; for were I to give an account of the various adventures, good fortune, and misfortunes, that have paid that gentleman frequent visits since 1777, it would make a volume, and he would be the hero of my book of books, were there ten times more stage heroes in my list of fame. But such a detail I do not hold myself warranted to undertake, though I assert, as a duty, that not any disgraceful incident of Mr. Vincent's conduct ever came within my knowledge or my hearing, but were I master of the many particulars which have occurred to that gentleman (which

I am not) I should not think I had a right to so doing, unless by his permission and approbation, which were not likely to have been asked by me, as I have not any intimacy with Mr. Vincent, and from his present mode of worship and manners it is not ever likely to be, even were my years to exceed those limited to myself or him.

However, in his stage career at Doncaster, I declared *off* from any engagement, alleging that his lungs were so very weak that he must beware of a consumption. From that period he has been so buffeted with Fortune, and in some measure taken her frowns and her rewards with such equal patience, and buffeted her so well, in turn, that I hope she will be weary of pursuing, and give him every happiness which he deserves, or that he himself can reasonably wish. He has been twice married, and has a family: I believe he got a decent fortune with both his partners. He has been a tutor with success to several young gentlemen, and has been in orders now for some years;—but the Church, without friends, is a barren prospect in general, except the reward for his good deeds, as a faithful pastor, he may meet in the world to come. When I was at Wakefield a few years since, he was well spoken of as a preacher and reader; but I have heard it remarked, (as of an actor in Richard III.) that when he has the duty of both to perform, he saves his energy and force on such

occasions to preserve voice for his sermon. How far such observation or remark may be true I know not, having only once heard him read prayers at Wakefield, which recitation gave me particular pleasure. Here some acquaintance will remark, that I pay myself a compliment I do not by any means merit; for if I liked my prayers, I should be oftener seen as an example for paying my proper duty by such due attendance. Here I can only give in answer, that having addicted myself to a strange set of hours, I have perverted the good so much to the evil habit, that it is almost next to impossible to bring myself into a train of hours at my time of life, to those which grace the sober and the regular good citizen. A lady who shall be nameless, observed to me in a tête-à-tête after dinner, in September 1791, as follows:

I was saying that I was surpris'd her name was not so and so, as I had mistaken Mr. ———, a man of great genius, as a writer, for her father? To which she said,—“ Mr. Wilkinson you are “ quite wrong, for I should have been proud of “ such a father.” “ Why, how do you know “ the genius of the man you are speaking of, who “ *never* read his Works?” “ Indeed but I have,” replied the lady, “ and with great pleasure;— “ and as I have answered you, Mr. Wilkinson, so “ honestly, tell me if you have not perused those

“volumes also?” To which I replied in the affirmative. “Well then, Sir, as you have so far honourably confessed, tell me what you think of the work?” “What do I think of the work!—why, certainly, that the two volumes contain great variety and merit, with a degree of delicacy not to be expected; and put my real entertainment, affected morality, and a sense of duty out of the question, I honourably prefer the bible, for real entertainment, improvement, comfort, and knowledge to the writer’s works alluded to.” “Mr. Wilkinfon,” said the lady, “I never believed you to be a hypocrite till now, and in my present *new* opinion, you Mr. Wilkinfon, are a confirmed one.” “I will convince you that I am not so, dear Cælia, and for this plain and never erring reason,—when I first perused the work you mention, such prevalence over the human mind and faculties has bewitching vice, arrayed in false and dangerous colours, that I never was easy till I obtained a second opportunity to gratify myself by a repetition, but when that opportunity so ardently longed for, arrived, I found it was an impure imagination, dressed in false genii shades, that had fascinated my mind and understanding; for instead of the great entertainment, my fancy had created, it was a dull exploring of passages, that had no more novelty than the

“ history of Tom Thumb, left me unimproved
“ and dissatisfied with myself and the author, and
“ for this plain reason, the vicious reading that
“ had made the first impression, had taken so
“ firm a possession of my mind, that the second was
“ only like stamping what could not be mended,
“ but proved, on experiment, to be weaker and
“ weaker: For like a seal on wax if it be good it
“ cannot be made better by a second application
“ from the assistance of the burning taper or the
“ hand of pressure. Now on reading the Bible,
“ where, if you only have the theory without the
“ practice, it cannot, must not be denied, but
“ there is to be found every elegance, with all
“ that is good and sublime, yet with the advantages of truth, it too often makes only a momentary transfixion on the brain and memory,
“ and is soon, alas! too soon effaced; for which
“ reason, good books cannot be too often taken
“ up, as they will ever be new, improving, and
“ the best physician for the mind and body; as
“ will also the beauties of Shakspeare, Young,
“ and others; but Shakspeare is undoubtedly the
“ first (after excepting the sublimity of holy writ);
“ for surely he was an inspired writer, and proves
“ that such talents were smiled on by his God,
“ who certainly approved the drama when he
“ created such a mortal for the honour of our
“ country and mankind.”

Say a fanatic what he will, he cannot controvert, nor can he produce from his own pen such strength of truth as Shakspeare can dash against his self-conceited fury of false fire and phrenzy: And I am proud to aver, that I once heard Mr. Vincent deliver the morning prayers at Wakefield, with such proper energy, to the best of my mind's conception, as gave me not only satisfaction at that time, but to reflect on since.

About a mile distant from Wakefield Mr. Vincent conducted a school, and on my return there some few years ago, observing, that notwithstanding he was spoke of with respect and esteem as a reader in the desk, and as an orator in the pulpit, I assumed the liberty to hint to him, that if he did not yet touch something more *real* by his officiating at church duty, and as he was not under any particular ties of gratitude for the pecunia bestowed on him either from the church or the stage, he should mix his discourses with a good quantity of fire, brimstone, pitchforks, and ever-burning lavas; and, as a proof of his conversion, not to let the stage by any means escape censure. Whether on that hint, or from his own suggestion, or from sudden inspiration, I cannot tell, but he has adopted something very like that mode, and reprobates diversions and plays with as good a grace as can be desired or expected; and no puritan can look

more pure or sanctified; and I verily believe I am not far mistaken, if I asked him to go to a play, he would stare at such an impure request, and like Lady Lambert in the Hypocrite, reply—
“Sir! would you have me commit a murder?”
Then Darnley says to Lady Lambert,—“I think
“I have seen your ladyship at a play.” “No, Sir,”
says the lady, “you are mistaken; it is possible
“you may have seen the devil’s imp, in my likeness at the play, but not me.” “No, Sir,”
says Cantwell, “The seeds of wickedness, it is
“true, grow up every where too fast,—but a play-house! a play-house! is the devil’s hot-bed.”

Mr. Vincent now has a school of great credit at Leeds, and many young gentlemen in that town are under his tuition and guardianship. He also is curate of St. John’s Church at Leeds, and I am informed, he has every good prospect of a return for the pains he takes, in being well established for life. He is not quick of sight or he would not wear glasses; and I have often thought that his eyes were not helped by the constant use of them in the street, at table, &c.

There is no gentleman I know that studied the graces some years ago more assiduously than Mr. Vincent: Indeed had he been born and bred under the eye of the late Lord Chesterfield, I truly think he would have approved Mr. Vincent’s unwearied attention to the minutiae of good

breeding; but whether different avocations take up his thoughts, and lay heavy on his neck and shoulders, and lead to absence, or from what cause I know not, but two years since, on a Sunday, in the summer 1791, I was walking down Kirk-gate at Leeds, with Mr. Cummins, a gentleman for whom Mr. Vincent professed (and doth profess) the highest regard, paid the greatest attention, and like Nicodemus, was glad to see him by night; yet, strange to tell, though we met him so *full butt*, that he could not avoid seeing us, yet those nasty spectacles, so far from assisting his natural good sense or sight, joined to his customary attention, good breeding, and common civility, he did not see either of us, that is, as to the knowledge of our persons. As to my own part, not having the pleasure of being on the mode of intimacy, and the slight he offered to me, on a degree of equality, certainly in point of affluence, though poor enough God knows; yet it was observed by Mr. Cummins; he said *to me*, "Sir, Mr. Vincent does not *know* us!" I replied, "It was a mistake, and owing to those bad spectacles; he will be quite unhappy should he be told of this, as I am certain his regard for you must be grounded on truth, as he would not be insincere or ungentlemanlike on any account; therefore to prevent Mr. Vincent's being hereafter vexed at your feelings on this occasion, I will immediately call him, and set

"the trifling matter right"—On which, as I *could not run*, and determined the hearing should not fail, (though the fight unluckily had) I called aloud, without lack of lungs, "Mr. Vincent!—" "Mr. Vincent!"—on which he stopped; and I led Mr. Cummins by the hand, and told the reason why I had so loudly, and indeed so rudely called on his name, for that Mr. Cummins had felt hurt at his not knowing him, when almost face to face as he passed, and that I had alleged in his favour, that I was well assured it must be the spectacles, absence, or full of thought that had occasioned the seeming neglect, and that Mr. Vincent would be obliged to me and not be offended when I mentioned Mr. Cummins's uneasiness. The event proved as I had predicted; Mr. Vincent was embarrassed, and said he was really confused and sorry for the hurry and seeming inattention, as he would not have offended Mr. Cummins knowingly upon any account; and there the matter ended: And I have assured myself that the said pastor of his flock must have judged my conduct perfectly right, the instant that his understanding and probity had time for reflecting on such a trifling incident. Not but I have known too often, (and possibly the reader may) that many persons, when bound by narrow circumstances, affect generosity, feeling, and strong boasted friendship; yet, when Fortune smiles, and any thing like affluence appears, old acquaintances are too often forgotten, not seen,

thought of, or attended to; yet common civility such persons should ever remember, and indeed strictly attend to; as friends so treated, when the day of poverty returns, may possibly retort in kind, and ingratitude *little* greatness must feel in the highest degree. For my own part, a person, of whatever rank, who behaves so to me, acquainted to-day, and a stranger to-morrow, however my interest, pride, and easy temper may candidly despise, I never really forgive, or think I can rely on such a person, be it lady or gentleman, as my friend or real good wisher. But to return to Mr. Vincent, of whom I have been lately speaking, I do not positively aver that I wish to see him either a bishop or a dean; but should it be so ordained, I am sure no act of mine should ever interfere, had I the power for his advancement either in church or state—and he has talents suitable I hope for either. — My only objection to his being the bishop or dean, is not meant to imply the least wish as a check on his future progress to greatness, advancement, or affluence. No! it is my self-love is the only reason; for if ever I should see him on the topmost height of church preferment, I can only hear of his amusing himself and his select parties by his performance on the violoncello or the bassoon, *without invitation*. Now, with a rare fat living of a thousand a year, and two or three rich benefices, he may visit, without

being prescribed what places his conscience may allow in a moderate degree as more proper for his leisure hours of recreation; and whenever that happens in a more or less proportion than my golden dreams have painted, as I wish it may, and that I may live to see such happy days, for his own sake, his family, and for others that may deserve and partake his bounty: And I here prophecy whenever such happy lot does occur, either in a higher or a less degree, why then reader, I am sure he will once more attend, and not be ashamed to be seen at my *church* again, I mean of course the *theatre*; where, attended by his family in a stage-box, I shall be glad to see him, and he will be as glad to sit.

So here with my blessings on his endeavours, I fly to my Doncaster season of 1777, which is not finished, owing to my brother exotic Mr. Vincent; and he certainly will allow the term NOT quite inapplicable,—though I do readily confess he is not so eccentric as myself; and I wish I could, to the *little good I can boast*, add an equal share of those qualifications, such as Mr. Vincent happily possesses, in his blended mixture of good and ill. I should then be decked to better advantage by the use, I hope, I should make of them, for the improvement of my mind and body; but unless I did make that use, I may be as well perhaps without them; for if neglected, it would be worse than a fertile soil being left unre-

garded and overspread with weeds, merely from unpardonable want of proper care and cultivation.

In my career at Doncaster that year, 1777, Miss Holmes made rapid improvement. Mr. TOM KENNEDY, son of Larry Kennedy, acted the Fops and Harlequin, and Mrs. TAPLIN, (who came with him that year to Doncaster, and was a daughter of Mr. Dyer, who was well known and respected for many years at Covent-Garden Theatre, as a man of strict honour, and deservedly esteemed in his public and in his private character) entered the lists with me as a first comedy lady: Her father had been very attentive to her in every respect, not only as to education, but in leaving her so well provided for in point of fortune from his unremitting assiduity, that a very little industry, added to her paternal right, would have insured her not only days but years of credit, with every necessary to render life agreeable; but her mother, who once trod the paths of rectitude, had made a false step, which her husband, Mr. Dyer, never forgave, and by which she rushed precipitately into vice and sudden distraction, and died in great distress.

“ Her one false step had blasted all her fame”——

and her stage requisites were narrowed: Her person was neat and genteel; she was a good Colombine: But her ill fate gave her up from the

comforts of Covent-Garden Theatre, to the miseries of a little country company, where she ended her days in remorse, and an accumulation of woe and calamity. Her daughter, the unfortunate Mrs. Taplin, unhappily for herself, lost at an early period of her life the most tender and best of fathers, by which irreparable misfortune, when trusted to her own guidance, she was ensnared into folly and dissipation, and her profession as an actress was a labour. Her figure was good, and she acted some parts with a degree of credit, as proved, (with pains and attention to character) she might have been a useful actress; but indolence and a mind turned topsy-turvy, possessed her leisure. I could not continue her with me after the first year, she then joined a little company in Yorkshire. Whether she is now living or dead I know not, but if existing, it must be so barely, that her departure from this life her friends (if she has any) need not regret, but doubly wish. Her Mrs. Candour, in the School for Scandal, was a good performance.

A Miss MUCKLOW, from Richmond, in Surry, made her appearance at Doncaster, 1777, in Indiana; some time after that she was married to Mr. Charles Wood of our Theatre.

Miss Holmes attracted the attention of Mr. Kennedy that season, by playing Phillis to his

Tom, the night of Miss Mucklow's appearance; this occasioned eyes of fire from Mrs. Taplin, who had depended on the false vows of the seducing Kennedy; it ended at last in a marriage (as I was informed) between Mr. Kennedy and Miss Holmes, who declared she would rather starve with Kennedy than live with a Prince. How far she sticks to that declaration and opinion at present, I know not, nor is it my business or wish to inquire or to be informed about.

Mr. WADDY, a gentleman from Ireland, played also for the first time at Doncaster, and acted Romeo, &c. That gentleman is now, and has been for some years at the Norwich Theatre; he is of the greatest utility of any actor I almost know, and performs several characters with great justice to his author, and to the credit of his manager Mr. Brunton, and himself: As a proof, (when with me) he studied *Mosca* in "Volpone, or the Fox," in little more than a week, and he acted it with such propriety and knowledge of that difficult author, as would have surprised Mr. Woodfall, and truly appeared to me an astonishing work, when the shortness of the time was considered for so arduous and difficult an undertaking. Of this gentleman I shall have occasion to make mention anon—anon, Sir.

The Doncaster season seemed to teem with novelties——

“Forth from the thicket rush’d another boar”——

Or rather say——

“She comes, she comes!”

“Array’d in smiles, the goddess gay and free,

“The heaven eyclip’d Euphrosine.”

For lo! Mrs. HUNTER, led by the hand of my best friend, General St. Leger, (who introduced that lady to perform Mrs. Oakley, which character she certainly supported with a degree of merit) and acted it under that noble and worthy General’s auspices, on Friday, September 26, 1777.

Mrs. Hunter had the talents of pleasing in a peculiar degree, on and *off* the stage; but *on* the stage, by her time being more pleasantly occupied when off, pleasure had led her to be inattentive to a memory not of itself to be depended upon, and was a great bar to her stage success. At a table Mrs. Hunter was a woman of great good-breeding, sense, and conviviality, and knew how to *disseet* with a grace and point.

But it is now high time to travel from Doncaster, where I have kept the reader so long, and convey the said personage in a safe and easy manner, (though perhaps not pleasant) to the Hull sea-

son, where on opening the winter campaign, Mr. INCHBALD, with my well-beloved, my beautiful Mrs. INCHBALD, were engaged from the Edinburgh Theatre, and on the 22d of October, 1777, Mr. Inchbald made his *entrée* at the Hull Royal Theatre, in the character of Sir Francis Wronghead, in Cibber's play of "The Journey to London;" and on October 28, my friend Mrs. Inchbald in the heroine Horatia, in Mr. Whitehead's tragedy of "The Roman Father." They were both well received. Mr. Inchbald was my friend, my worthy man, my esteemed actor, in all my long "Pilgrim's Progress." For the time he was engaged with me, I never experienced more ingenuousness, honour, and integrity, nor did I ever know an actor of such universal worth, who confessed at least weekly, (if not daily) the comforts he felt in his Yorkshire situation, and ardently expressed an anxiety for the success and life of me, his manager, whose interest he, by every means, endeavoured to support. He soon grew into great favour, particularly by his performing Justice Credulous, Sir Anthony Absolute, and many comic old gentlemenlike characters; his painting (to which he had I believe been bred) also aided his popularity: His picture-scene, now in full sight, whenever the School for Scandal is represented, proves his talents, execution, and design: In short, it was a continuance, during his engage-

ment with me, of the utmost satisfaction; and he adored his lovely Mrs. Inchbald to a degree of enthusiasm, though the said *allowed beautiful* was then but mortal; but to her praise be it spoken, she was then and is beautiful still, and that beauty, like her understanding, unfaded, and if possible, more impressive.

But not to interrupt my journal, I will quit Mrs. Inchbald for the present, in great increase of fame, and like a novelist, inform the reader, that on the close of the Hull season, early in January, 1778, after all these new performers just mentioned, I received a letter from Mr. Palmer, (who has been ever ready to promote my interest) that Mr. Foote having made his serious, final exit in the month of October, 1777, Mr. Harris, his friend, and manager of Covent-Garden Theatre, wished much to enter into a treaty with me for a few nights that winter, and pledged himself for his opinion of Mr. Harris's honour and veracity.

This journey with others, was the occasion of my adopting the title of the WANDERING PATENTEE, as from my quitting my Yorkshire home to trip to Dublin, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other places, occasioned Mr. Woodfall's whimsically favouring me with that appellation. Had I conducted my own characters, I think it would have answered much better. My performance of Bayes, when done in five acts, went off with great eclat; and I here return thanks to Mr. Wroughton,

for his compliment, who asking Mrs. Crawford, if she had seen Mr. Wilkinson in Bayes? She replied "No." "Then," says Mr. Wroughton, "I am sorry for it, as Mr. Wilkinson was the "only person who acted it like a gentleman*." I played Ironsides with the Epilogue, and Major Sturgeon, on Thursday, January 15, 1778, and afterwards Mr. Foote's characters in the Minor, also Bayes, Midas, &c.

I cannot resist mentioning a little circumstance that put the audience out of temper, which was the uncommon delay in beginning the farce of The Mayor of Garratt—a point all gentlemen and ladies should consider, as it spoils all effect of character; but the fault did *not* that evening originate with me, but arose merely from accident, which was, that in all the collection of properties at Covent-Garden Theatre, a pair of French jack-boots could not be produced. Mr. Harris ordered a pair to be made at any expence, but when put on, they were so flimsy, and hung down in such a manner, that it was impossible, as Major Sturgeon, to proceed: The only resource was, the sending in great haste to Drury-Lane Theatre, to beg the lending of the pair in use at that house for the Frenchman in Queen Mab, &c.

* Meaning that (as Bayes is always *ad libitum*) Mr. W. acted that character well, and without taking any rude liberties with the performers in their profession.

and had it been a pantomime night, the request could not have been granted: However, they were at length obtained, and when brought to my dressing-room, the feet were so large, it was a considerable time before they could be so stuffed as for mine to secure a purchase in them.

I have merely mentioned this as wonderful to me, who had and have an excellent pair at the York Theatre: Yet the two London Theatres could only produce *one* pair;—Mr. Foote's were borrowed of Mr. Barber, in Monmouth-street, and were of a lighter kind: As a proof of their *lightness*, they were stolen before Mr. Foote's death, by some nimble fingered youth.

In acting the Minor one evening at Covent-Garden, as I was repeating the soliloquy in Shift, one person was honouring me with a perpetual hiss, and guessing that at the end of a period I should be certain of the kind repetition from my upper-gallery friend, I collected myself, paused, and advanced to the front of the stage, and made the following address——

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

“I take the liberty of informing you, that I am
“a plant of your own rearing. I had the honour
“to be received on these boards, in the characters
“I am now playing, with great applause, even
“when I was a boy. I am now of full age, and
“beg you will not at this period of my life, allow
“me to be cut off by a shilling.”

This provoked two most thundering plaudits with loud laughs, and secured me a most favourable reception during the remainder of the performance.

Mr. Woodfall did not seem to think I was like Mr. Foote, and that I walked in boots, as Major Sturgeon, at the rate of five miles an hour. To use Mr. Woodfall's own words, will be doing more justice to the criticism, (whether strictly right or not) than any words I can adopt; as I ever think Mr. Woodfall clever, however he may inflict me with stripes: For if I am worthy the lashing, I shall be proud of feeling the smart from so judicious and masterly a strapado.

“Mr. Wilkinson in Major Sturgeon, strutted about too vehemently;—had he been obliged to march and countermarch from Acton to Ealing, and from Ealing to Brentford, in the sight of the audience, he could not have gone forward at a greater rate than he last night moved about the stage.”

However, notwithstanding that criticism, I could not devise how I had lost a likeness of Mr. Foot in that character; and till revolving lately on that matter, as I really ever did and shall pay great deference to Mr. Woodfall's opinion, I could not conceive how it could be; but I think I was not so wrong as I then fancied myself,—and my reason is this;—Mr. Foote had been con-

stantly playing with one leg, from the year 1766, till September 1777, eleven or twelve seasons comprized in that time, which form the audience habitually beheld him in, and viewing him constantly with one leg, till by degrees, they forgot, or did not seem to think he ever had appeared otherwise, or even wanted a leg—such is the force of habit. Now, my recollecting Mr. Foote in his prime of life, health, and spirits, and at that time violent, I naturally with two legs, never thought of being like him as a lame man, but as like him as I could be when he was in a more perfect state; and probably he himself, for the want of taming, was not so good an actor as when cut short; which the critic and the audience not recurring to, laid a blame on the likeness, by my not appearing as a maimed, but a more perfect figure, as Major Sturgeon, than Mr. Foote had been for many years. I should be much more like him now, though not for the same pleasing reasons, as age advances, and having dislocated one leg, and terribly broke the other, and would much rather relinquish those likenesses, but that is impossible, so I must be agreeable to myself only.

My last night, February 6, at Covent-Garden, was for my benefit: I had a very brilliant audience. The play was “The Kind Impostor” revived, with “The Author”—I acted Don Manuel and Cadwallader—The applause was so strong in the second act of the farce, that we were obliged to stop

for some time; but note, reader, that Mrs. Green was the Mrs. Cadwallader, and no wonder the audience were to a degree highly satisfied. She was a charming actress. After the farce I gave Mr. Foote's "Tragedy a-la-mode, or Lindamira in Tears." I here insert the whole act as it was originally acted by Mr. Foote and myself: Its never having been printed, may afford some entertainment to the reader, particularly if the gentleman or lady who honours it with a perusal, be theatrical.

Be it worthy observation, that whenever Mr. Bannister, Mr. Saville Carey, or others now give an imitation of Mr. Foote, they one and all do the likeness as lame, and as only with one leg: Some performances at Covent-Garden were widely different as to effect in 1760 and 1778.—As the weak traits of what I could recollect of those dead personages in 1778, who had some years departed hence, since 1760, were only known and recollected in a glimmering manner by one in a hundred of the observant auditors; for 18 years had made strange slaughter with the beaux, cits, fine ladies, not excepting the gods above. Now put me at my best test of mimicry, the which we will suppose, like Bayes, 1760, against that eminent actor and mimic Mr. Bannister, jun. now in 1793, my inferiority must sink not only by the contrast of his unrivalled excellence, but from his treating the public with the mimicry of those they daily

see and hear, and they are thereby habituated to be familiarized good judges, by tracing Mr. Bannister's similitude of the living; which would be as different as paste-board figures, and the more substantial flesh and blood, with me as an opponent, with materials borrowed or stolen, and many of those personages (if not all) quite forgotten.—If ever I possessed any true claim to a superiority at mimicry against Mr. Foote, I was much indebted to a flexibility of features, of which I could myself be the judge when I was right or wrong. To exemplify this in some degree to the reader's comprehension, the audience in London would then frequently applaud me when aiming at Mr. Garrick's, Mr. Sheridan's, or Mr. Woodward's manner; I was right as to tones, if approbation were to be judged as the criterion, but I did not feel the traits right as to face. But when as Mr. Barry, Mossop, Sparks, Foote, or Shuter, they were instantaneously noticed before I spoke—I was almost equally lucky in my reception, when my caricature represented the much-admired and the beautiful Mrs. Woffington: but those likenesses are obliterated from my memory; and were I in full possession, such a performance could not avail or give any entertainment to our present race, unless, to force belief, the much lamented performers were to arise from the dead; perhaps the moderns would excuse such a revisit, and not wish to disturb their present sound sleep on any account whatever.

AS ACTED 1763,

At the Hay-Market Theatre.

TRAGEDY A-LA-MODE,

BEING THE

SECOND ACT

OR

Mr. FOOTE's

Diversions of the Morning,

AND SUBSTITUTED IN LIEU OF

THE FORMER SECOND ACT

IN HIS FARCE CALLED

T E A.

ACTED BY

Mr. FOOTE and Mr. WILKINSON,

IN DRURY-LANE THEATRE, 1758-9.

Dramatis Personae.

Mr. FUSTIAN,	-	Mr. FOOTE.
GOLCONDUS, <i>the hero</i> ,	-	Mr. WILKINSON.
PROMPTER,	- -	Mr. PORTER.
TOWNLY,	- -	Mr. _____
MANLY,	- -	Mr. _____
Mr. PROJECT,	-	Mr. KENNEDY.
CRONTES, <i>the King</i> ,	-	Mr. _____
TRIBUS, <i>the Confidant</i> ,	-	Mr. _____
PRINCESS LINDAMIRA,		Mr. PEARCE.

N. B. When this piece was first acted by Mr. Foote, with PASTEBOARD FIGURES, it entirely failed in the effect; but with PERFORMERS, *accoutred ridiculously pompous*, and in *fierce whiskered high tragedy*, the effect those dumb actors had assisted my Imitations, and received unbounded applause.

TRAGEDY A-LA-MODE.

ACT II.—SCENE I.

PROJECT and PROMPTER, (discovered.)

Proj. If Fustian comes, admit him instantly. Wa
Mrs. Storm at the rehearsal?

Prom. Yes; and will most certainly play on Friday;
but Monday after she begs to be excus'd;—for as she in-
tends to be sick that day, it will be dangerous to come
out of doors.

Proj. Well, necessity has no law, she must be indulged.
Have you given Thunder and Verjuice to Tom Struttum?

Prom. Yes; but he says unless his daughter Lyddy
does Lightening, he'll revolt to the other house.

Proj. Let him go and be damn'd! an impudent rascal;—
then give Thunder to Lungs, and Verjuice to Sneak;—
so Mr. Struttum may march to the devil.

Prom. We had better do Romeo, to-morrow, Sir; for
Juliet expects soon to lie-in. She is, indeed, already so
big, that we can scarce get her up to the balcony.

Proj. Very pretty—Zounds! we had better at once
turn the Stage to an Infirmary; for what with real
complaints, and imaginary consequence, I shan't in a
week have a play to my back—but I'll put an end to

this—D'ye hear; post an order in the Green-Room, that no person under three pounds a week, shall presume to be sick upon any account for the future.

Prom. I'll do it, Sir:—Oh! what shall I say to the lame man for low comedy?

Proj. His figure is good. Does he come on in his squints? How are his grins?

Prom. A little too ghastly, but he tops the trebles.

Proj. Well that's something; but hush, here is somebody here. [Exit Prompter.

Enter TOWNLY and MANLY.

Town. Mr. Project, your slave. Here I have brought you an old acquaintance.

Proj. What, Mr. Manly in town again! I thought we had lost you—Oh, we have had a sad misfortune of you.

Man. How so, my old friend?

Proj. Lack-a-day, Sir,—since your abdication from the critical chair, we have had nobody to check by the severity of his judgment, the introduction of absurd novelty, or to point out and patronize real and modest merit. We are all run to weed, turn'd topsy-turvy; taste is fled. Oh, Booth and Betterton! Betterton and Booth! that was the day! Then the stage was triumphant!

Man. I am not quite so clear in that, my old acquaintance; decess'd merit, which we can neither fear nor envy, is always discerned through a magnifying glass; and besides I am afraid a good deal of the fault lies in ourselves, age will destroy sensibility: There's a wide difference between thirty and threescore; neither you nor I have the same relish for the same objects as in our days of frolic and vacancy, Tom.

Town. That is honestly own'd, Manly.

Proj. Well, well, see and judge.

Man. For that I have no time, I leave town to-morrow.

Proj. Indeed!—I am sorry for that; however 'tis lucky I see you to-day, for I expect every moment a dramatic projector, and should be glad to have your opinion of his scheme.

Man. That you may command.

Proj. There is novelty I promise you.

Town. That will go a good way.

Proj. And whim.

Man. That will go farther.

Proj. And œconomy.

Town. That will answer all.

Proj. Nay, but that won't be discern'd; for I take his plan to be—but here he is, and can best explain it himself.—

Enter FUSTIAN.

Mr. Fustian, your devoted. Give me leave to introduce Mr. Manly, the ablest critic of his time; and Mr. Townly, the most fashionable man of the age, to your better acquaintance.

Fust. Sir, you do me honour.

Proj. This is a lucky encounter, a most happy audience for the production of your piece; for if you please my old friend here, you have the critics to a man; and if Mr. Townly proves favourable, the gay world is your own.

Fust. You speak my very thoughts, Mr. Project—these are the men I wish to please, the *Primores Populi*; a fig for the *Populum Tributum*—Your voices outweigh a theatre.

Town. Extremely polite.

Man. But what is your plan?

Fust. Sir, I have many; and most of them calculated to punish that insolent, self-sufficient race of people, called players; who, tho' but the midwives of the Muses, have the arrogance to elbow and jostle us poets, the heirs apparent of Parnassus, the genuine offspring of Apollo.

Man. They are a little overbearing I own; but these gentry are so frequently cloth'd with imaginary royalty, that it is no wonder if they now and then forget their real characters.

Fust. But they should consider a little, Mr. Manly, to whom they owe their crowns and their sceptres. Why I, little as I seem to be, have made no less than three Emperors, two Chams of Tartary, five Roman Consuls, and a Pope; and yet these rascals are as forgetful to whom they owe their power, as a Member of Parliament of his Constituents the day after his election.

Town. Ungrateful indeed!

Fust. But I'll clip their wings, I'll humble their pride.

Proj. How, Mr. Fustian? that day I shall rejoice to see.

Fust. Why, I have two schemes; the first is to sweep the actors entirely from the stage.

Proj. What! shut up the theatre?

Fust. Wide of the mark. Shut up the theatre! no, my design is to furnish it with an entire new race of beings.

Man. I don't understand you.

Fust. A little patience and I'll explain. Rousseau, in a letter to D'Alembert, who has recommended the establishment of a theatre at Geneva, has objected to the morals of the performers, and insinuates, that their contagious influence might corrupt the sounder parts of the state.

Man. Surely that is saying too much?

Fust. Hear me out. Now I have a scheme of introducing a set of actors beautiful in their persons, decent in their demeanor, and of an exceeding nice morality; slaves to no passions, warp'd by no prejudice, and tools to no party.—In short——

A blameless race of souls sincere,

In action faultless, and in honour clear;

Who brook no promise, serv'd no private end,

Who gain'd no title, and who lost no friend.

In a word, gentlemen, they are—[*Mimics.*]—a set of puppets.

Town. Oh, Zooks! that can never do.

Fust. Why not? You have not, I believe, sufficiently considered this matter, Mr. Townly. Reflect only on how many puppets you meet in the world: For who ever acts not upon his own principles, but condescends to receive direction and motion from another, is to all intents and purposes, though composed of flesh and blood, as arrant a puppet as mine of wood and wire.

Man. Why, you are quite a Juvenal, Mr. Fustian.

Fust. Let the struck deer go weep. Well, your opinion of my plan, gentlemen? But I had better communicate the other I have here, you will then be more able to advise.

Proj. Let us hear it.

Fust. Why, tho' as I can't in the first instance banish all living beings from the stage, yet I have contriv'd to do the whole business of the scene by the aid of one personage only, and that is nearly as well.

Man. That indeed is artful.

Fust. Only consider, my dear Townly, what a deal of useless pains and unnecessary time our modern Bards (a

few excepted) have bestowed on their tragedies: Five acts, it is true, the laws of the stage require; but could not we contrive, by retrenching all superfluous personages, by pruning irregular shoots, and lopping diseased limbs, to compress all the pith and matter of these five acts into fifteen minutes.

Town. An ingenious contrivance! But how will the public relish the sterility of the repast?

Fust. You mean the want of variety of characters; you miss the point. Lack-a-day, Mr. Townly, it is not the play, but the player; not the exploits of a Richard or a Tamerlane, but the fame of his representative that the people come to see. If then we can get rid of all the supernumary personages, and the whole business of the scene into one mouth, we can ease the poet's labour, lessen the manager's expence, and save our own time, and produce the favourite actor.

Proj. But how can this be done?

Fust. Nothing so easy. I have here in my pocket a piece, that not only demonstrates the possibility, but propriety of the design. My title is "Love till Death," and my characters are,

GOLCONDUS, the HERO;

CRONTES, the KING;

TRIBUS, the CONFIDANT; and

LINDAMIRA, the PRINCESS.

The first to be flesh and blood, and the rest pasteboard.

Man. Pasteboard!

Fust. Yes; for as nobody but the hero is to speak,—of what materials the other characters are constructed, is very indifferent.

Fust. The thought is new.

Man. A great deal will depend upon the execution.

Fust. I see you still have your doubts; but mark the end; and if I don't produce every character, incident, embarrass, discovery, surprise, if my plot is not regular, my denouement natural, and my catastrophe affecting; if my sentiments are not strong, and my similes striking, lock me from pen and ink for ever.

Town. You promise much.

Fust. Nay more;—not a groan nor a grumble,—not a twist nor a torture,—not a stab nor a start,—not a reel nor a rant,—but my Prince shall produce in the progress of the piece.

Man. Well,—begin!

Fust. Be seated—[*They sit*]—Prompter!

Enter PROMPTER.

Is my man come with the figures?

Prom. No, Sir.

Fust. Push on one of the scene-shifters, as Tribus the Confidant. As the first scene of a tragedy is, from the banging of doors, the rustling of silks, and the mediocrity of the performers, seldom attended to, and contains indeed little more than a map of the country where the poetical magic has conveyed us, with an account of the King and the Queen; and the rest of the house, you will not grudge giving that up.

Proj. No, no.

Fust. Then enter, Golcondus and Tribus.

SCENE, a ROYAL CHAMBER.

Enter GOLCONDUS and TRIBUS on opposite sides.

Prince. Welcome, thou bosom partner of my soul,
Let me repose within thy faithful breast

The anguish that torments me.

'Twas on the fatal day that Crontes

Join'd in wedlock with Dardella,

At early dawn I sought the wood's recess,

There musing mop'd, the lazy minutes march'd

With slow and solemn pace, when to my view

A radiant form appear'd, divinely bright,

'Twas Lindamira's self, my friend, in all

Her heaven of beauty.

Think'st thou the matchless maid will hear

My vows?

Think'st thou the King will e'er refuse her

To me?

Oh! oh!—I cannot bear the thought.

Fust. Push on Lindamira.

Enter LINDAMIRA in full dress, with Train and Page.

Prince. But soft ye, now—for Lindamira comes:

Oh, cruel maid! if ever faithful lover

Doated like me!—If ever.—Oh! by all—

And dost thou yield?—She does, she does!

Ye waters gently glide,—winds catch

The sound—

Oh, thou enchanting fair!

Stars fall from heav'n, suns forget to rise,

And Chaos come, when Lindamira dies.

[Exit with Lindamira.]

Fust. Here ends the act.

[Exeunt the Figures.]

Town. The act is short, Mr. Fustian.

Man. But yet every thing is done that the dramatic laws require.

Fust. Right, Sir! you are introduced to the characters,

the plot unfolds, and there is the appearance of a happy catastrophe.

Proj. That is true.

Fust. Now the rules require that the next act must throw a rub in the way.

Man. Oh! absolutely critical.

Fust. *Secundum artem*, upon my honour, gentlemen; but to proceed:—Now enter the Prince in the Presence-Chamber, in deep reflection.

Enter PRINCE.

Prince. How frail is man
Perplex! Surely the gods—— [*A trumpet blows.*
But hark! the sprightly trumpet speaks
The King's approach. Down, down my heart.

Enter the KING.

Oh, Royal Sir! if e'er your suppliant slave— [*Ex. King.*
How! refus'd! darkness and devils!
Down to hell, allegiance!

Enter LINDAMIRA.

Oh! my fair, art thou too witness of my
Dire disgrace?——
Say, can a father's harsh command
Controul? Then thou ne'er lov'd'st——
Curs'd be the hours, the trees,
The sun, the sex, and every thing
But her!—Oh! my rash tongue!
Ha! see, she faints, she faints!—Ha! see, revives,
Revives!—Oh! ecstasy!——
And wilt thou seek with me some happier shore,
Where fathers, mothers, friends we'll meet no more.

The merchant thus at home a bankrupt made,
Seeks out another clime and drives another trade.

[Exit PRINCE leading LINDAMIRA.]

Fust. Well gentlemen, how do you like the progress?

Man. Infinitely.—You have given us here the rub and the removal; but how do we proceed?

Fust. The most naturally in the world. The lovers are now, you know, to meet in the Palmy Grove—You have a Palmy Grove, Mr. Project?

Proj. I'm afraid not. We have a flat of oak, with a set of elm wings.

Fust. They will do. To meet, I say, in the Grove, and prepare for flight, there we must rouse a storm, sadden the scene, dash all their hopes, and deepen their distress.

Man. You have a world of business.

Fust. Busy as bees. Enter the hero first, as in duty bound.

SCENE, a GROVE; Stage darkened.

Enter the PRINCE.

Prince. Night—black brow'd Night, Queen of the
Ebon Wand

Has o'er the world her sable mantle thrown,
While Philomela in melodious strains, sings
Her sad sorrows to the list'ning winds.

Fust. There are lines, Manly!

Man. Poetical indeed.

Fust. Fine!—To the list'ning winds.

Prince. The starry host—

But hush, my soul, for Lindamira comes—

Enter LINDAMIRA.

She comes—welcome, my love! for thy
Approach, e'en time itself stood still.

Fust. And here in compliance to time, the lovers stand still too; and in the midst of a sentimental conference on love, virtue, the moon and the seven stars, are surpris'd by the King's Guards.

Enter four GUARDS, two on each side, who seize them both.

Prince. Dogs! will you tear her from me?

Let loose your hold——

You must not, shall not part us.

My eye-strings crack, my eye-balls roll,

And quite deform the fashion of my soul;

So the first man from Paradise exil'd,

With fond reluctance views the blooming wild;

Robb'd of the dear companion of his flight,

To all his former pleasures bids a long good night.

Love, death, destruction, fire, water,—

Oh, farewell forever! [*Both forc'd off on contrary sides.*]

SCENE, the PALACE.

A shout, Trumpets, Lamps up, then enter the PRINCE.

Prince. Thank ye, my friends—thank ye, my

Fellow subjects—for ye have given me liberty,

Ye have given me life—but what is life

Without my Lindamira!—But see,

By heavens she comes!

'Tis, 'tis she! and we shall still be happy.

Enter LINDAMIRA weeping, hair dishevelled, &c.

What means that bosom's heaving?

Why burst those tears? speak Lindamira!

Destruction—No, he could not! durst not!

Marry thee! force thee to his bed

While the dire thund're rattled o'er his head.

Oh, my sad soul! What means that haggard eye!
That drooping lip!—[*whispers*]—Ah! poison'd say'st
thou?

Is it so:—ha! see, she dies! she dies! [*Princess falls.*
She's dead.

Well! well! well! what—what then becomes of me?
Oh! I will follow my advent'rous love. [*Trumpet sounds.*
But hark! the King!

Enter the KING and TRIBUS.

I'll like a serpent steal into his bosom,
And sting him home. [*Stabs the King with his fist.*
This for myself. [*Also stabs himself with his fist.*

[*To Tribus who lifts up his fist, and is going to kill himself.*
This too is well.

Tribus, I charge thee live.
Oh! if humanity can touch thy breast,
Entomb'd with Lindamira let me rest;
Tell my sad tale, that all the world may weep,
I'm very sick—One kiss, good night, I'm fast asleep.

[*Dies.*

Fust. Is it not marvellously mournful!

Man. But where is the application, Mr. Fustian? Who
gives the moral?

Fust. Why, as all the characters are tongue-ty'd by
death, I intend to clap the moral into the Epilogue,
which may be given according to the custom of the stage,
by the deceas'd Prince. Come, will your Highness get
up and give us the finishing stroke with dignity and de-
liberation.

Prince. Let cruel parents learn from woes like these,
To wed their daughters where those daughters please.

[*Exit Prince.*

Man. Ay, marry, that is wholesome advice, and I dare say will be universally followed.

Fust. Ay, ay, Mr. Manly, my plays will not only mend the stage, but the world. But I have not half done; hitherto I have only bounc'd in the buskin; now see how genteely I slide into the sock.—My comedy, gentlemen, is——

Town. Oh, we shall fatigue you too much; besides it is our hour of dining; if Mr. Fustian will communicate over a bottle.

Fust. With pleasure.

To this one mark, all my ambition tends;
When here to please the town, at home my friends.

[*Exit Omnes.*]

While in London the winter 1778, I had engaged Mr. Digges, a gentlemen of family, education, and well established on the stage, during my London expedition. He acted Richard, Cato, Falstaff, Sir John Brute, and the Drunken Colonel, but he had not the good luck to please. I was out of favour by going to London, therefore any person of my appointing was not to be encouraged; not from any particular compliment to me, but for my not being in leading-strings by the proprietors, and daring to give myself a month's relief, and take a benefit in London. However that kind behaviour has subsided, and the affection for me is not at present so violent; and

whenever my final departure happens, I need not be anxious about the feelings of the public for my irreparable loss. I must observe that a manager must be a dolt, who on a trip to London does not glean some good things, as caterer for his friends and patrons in the country.

My being in London, without permission of the proprietors, who looked on themselves as my masters, more than my being sole director, brought them to such extremes of anger, and the interest money not having turned out equally lucrative the second as the first year of their entering into the hazard of their money, which was only 100 guineas each, and not only a ticket of admission to all the theatres in the circuit, but that ticket transferable, that in short they grew inflamed to the highest pitch. No National Assembly could be more furious than some of my Members, in their Theatrical Committees; as a proof I give the following instance, inserted in their books and signed by their own hands, and which I have now in my possession. The agreement made on my own part was, that I would only take half the receipt of the house on my benefit nights at York, Hull, and Leeds,—the other half to be thrown into the common stock for our general advantage: In short, how an agreement so plain as saying, "Mr. Wilkinson to have half the receipt," could give them a privilege

to deduct the usual charges at my benefits, was very strange; but as a similar accident happened after that period, I will leave the discussion for a time perhaps not so proper, yet more convenient and applicable. In short, the opposition grew to such lengths as might justly have been imputed to faults on all sides: For my own part I was truly unhappy; for I not approving of controul, and they being so very overbearing, who enjoyed good interest for their money, besides the privilege of tickets, &c. and their property as individuals a trifle, mine my chief dependence. However at last by the passion of jealousy, the love of power, their thirst for controul, and mine for absolute sway, both parties were so circumstanced, involved, and dissatisfied, it was impossible to proceed with satisfaction. Now for me who loved liberty and protested to be as free as air, it would have been a scene of misery; for by perpetual jars, we fell into the miseries of a civil war. I convened a meeting, protested my dislike of their treatment, had secured the good written opinion of Mr. Murphy on the subject, which said opinion I have now in possession. I need not add, that it is a sensible opinion when I mention the name of Mr. Murphy, nor that it met with my approbation will not be wondered at, as it perfectly coincided in every point with my own wishes, therefore was undoubtedly clever,

clear, and decisive. I declared to the proprietors my unhappiness and dislike, and offered to raise the money, and pay them the three thousand guineas in six months: this they accepted; some of them from a belief that I could not raise the money, others not being satisfied with their bargain, "Consent being mutual saved the lawyer's fee." So all parties were pleased; I am sure I was truly happy, and never regretted my repurchase from that hour to this, and firmly believe no theatre can be conducted with either pleasure, content, or profit, where so many heads must puzzle and confound each other. When we parted, all enmity and bickerings ended; we were all on good friendly terms; I was to raise the money, and pay them before January 1779. Indeed I have luckily experienced whenever I have wanted money, which will at times be the case, I ever have a friend will supply me, my word is judged truly sufficient, and of that the reader will excuse and pardon my being a little vain; not that I have a right to boast of what ought to be, and I hope is general, the possession of common honesty, which pays in good interest, being incontrovertibly the best policy.

I will quit the subject relative to myself and the proprietors, and inform the reader, that when in London, I had secured a copy of the then high flourishing new Comedy of "The School for Scandal," which was acted at York for my

benefit, on Tuesday, April 21, 1778. It was well produced, I had paid great attention to the manners of the performers, who all excelled in their different parts, and it was one of the best acted plays I had seen in London: Indeed, take it for all in all, the best—"Every Man in his Humour" excepted, which certainly, when revived by Mr. Garrick, was a credit to him, his actors, and his audience; and the play being almost obsolete, rendered it a task, and a test of his performers abilities. "The School for Scandal" did not want any assistance in my power, Mr. Inchbald finished the particular scene with great credit, and acquired much approbation, and it really was at that time a well-acted play at York, and was so exactly followed as to exits, entrances, and situations, that a London visitor at York would have been surprised at the similitude; but that play like myself, has had its golden days, and is sunk into a mediocrity. It was then looked on as a prodigy: It is a play of such sterling merit, as must ever keep the stage and make the author revered as a man of unbounded genius, if he had not given (as he certainly has) many evident proofs of the highest exaltation of sentiment, wit, and a superior understanding, as an orator, in the House of Commons, besides his "Duenna," "Critic," &c. which will make him live long after his death.

I need not say that the School for Scandal rendered me great service, my audiences must have been unlike all others had it not, and they must have deviated in taste and judgment.

Mrs. WEBB, on her return to her engagement for the summer season, came from Edinburgh to York, and acted a few nights, and with much approbation: Her first appearance was in Mrs. Heidleburgh, Thursday, May 14, 1778. On the 22d of May, Mrs. MASSEY acted Jane Shore, and Zara in Zara, for her benefit. Massey had a wonderful opinion of her abilities, and the lady not behind hand in the same. She was very *so*, *so*, though not destitute of some degree of merit.

On opening at Leeds, Lady Fleming (now Harewood) honoured me with patronizing my "Dunna," and "The Commissary," on Wednesday, July 1, 1778, which was performed with applause that evening, to a genteel and crowded audience. The Hitchcocks had left me that summer, and were gone to the Hay-Market.

Mr. DAVIS, well known for his fashionable taste in all tragedy geer, made a stage trial in Edwin, in "Matilda" on Friday July 3, 1778; but he and the Muses did not agree. The York stage, and indeed the London and Dublin Theatres have been much indebted for his pains in embellishing Kings, Queens, Princes, Emperors, and Ladies of Quality: I have purchased in the year I am now scribbling, a variety of dresses, which

have been universally approved, made in London under the direction of the said gentleman.

Monday, July 1778, Mr. Kennedy had a benefit, when my old acquaintance Mr. JEFFERSON, formerly of Drury-Lane, performed Ranger, and Miss JARRATT, a beautiful girl, with a good voice, acted that season, at Leeds, the Maid of the Mill, Leonora in "The Padlock," Rosetta, &c. She was deservedly much admired, not more so in any of her performances, than when singing the song of "Jockey and the Rose." Miss Jarratt also played with me on a short trip to Halifax, and went with me after that to York race-week, where she acted nearly the same routine of characters, and Mr. Jefferson Don John in "The Chances," &c.

On Tuesday August 27, Mr. CAWDELL, manager of the Scarbro' Theatre, acted Young Philpot to Miss Jarratt's Maria: He was well received, but there are many characters he would have filled to much more advantage. In his Deaf Lover, the Mayor in Mr. Foote's "Nabob," and many comedy parts of peculiar dry eccentric cast, he has few competitors on any stage: Besides his general utility, he is a great favourite with the ladies—A play at Scarbro' would be a bore without Mr. Cawdell.

Mr. Jefferson and Miss Jarratt also performed at Wakefield and at Doncaster.—At the races, at the latter place, I may date an honourable as well as a pleasurable event, for on Wed-

nesday, Sept. 23, 1778, I was to act Sir Peter Teazle, when I received the unexpected favour of a note of invitation from Lord Surry, (now his Grace of Norfolk) to dine snug with him and a friend on a haunch of venison at the Red Lion. I cannot resist the impulse of relating this circumstance, and hope it will not displease his Grace, as that day was the cause of my pride and what share of sense I possessed being elated; and what was still more superior and highly gratifying to my pride and feelings, I have been so truly fortunate as to have preserved his Grace's good will from that period to this, and have been often under great obligations to his Grace for many acts of kindness; and I here beg he will favour me with accepting my acknowledgments, for I never returned my thanks in professing compliments, and knew his Grace of Norfolk had not time to spare for accepting adulation from my inferiority; and indeed I have often questioned myself as to the being too remiss: If I have, it has not been from a want of inward gratitude, for I thought a great deal, though I said never a word.

Wednesday October 7, 1778, the often-mentioned Mr. and Mrs. King returned once more, after her *non-succes*s at Drury-Lane, which I have before, in this book, given an account of. He acted Dashwould, and she Lady Bell, in Mr. Murphy's, "Know Your Own Mind."—But the loss of fashion, from not being followed above in the me-

tropolis, wofully hurt her consequence in the opinion of the people ; a proof of Mr. Sheridan's remark being just—"how few people choose to undergo the fatigue of judging for themselves."

From the good success of the short season at Wakefield, (many persons assuring me the audience there did not think they had plays enough) I returned for a week, the Company being greatly reinforced with Mr. John Kemble, Mr. and Mrs. King, Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock, Mr. Wood from the Hay Market, and a Mr. Waylett, then a young actor, and son to a Mr. Waylett, who formerly lived in the Savoy.

The public not considering at Wakefield, that naturally where there is kind treatment, encouragement, and money coming in, the Manager will not be averse, but rejoice to attend,—but the extraordinary expence is never by the million once thought of: They in idea convey a troop of comedians as easily from one district to another, as they suppose a troop of horse obey orders from the War Office.—However, that I might not appear obstinate, I that year gave the performers an addition of salary, and tried the experiment of an additional week at Wakefield. I had formed great hopes, not only from a reliance on assurances and general opinion, but above all from the attraction of novelty.

With the addition of such force as now mentioned, I set forward at Wakefield, by securing

the kindness of Sir John Silvester Smith, of that neighbourhood, to bespeak the first play, "Tamerlane"—Tamerlane, Mr. Cummins—Bajazet, Mr. Wilkinson—Selima, Mrs. Inchbald—Arpasia, Mrs. King, with "The Defenter,"—Henry, Mr. Wood—Simpkin, Mr. Suett—Louisa, Mrs. Hitchcock;—but I am ashamed to say the receipt was only 12l.—Tuesday, "As You Like It," and "Cymon," only 8l.—Wednesday, Mr. Kemble made his first appearance in Captain Plume, with a Pantomime, 12l.—Thursday, a benefit, "Grecian Daughter," with a flourishing bill, 29l.—Friday, John Milnes, Esq. favoured me with bespeaking a play, and though he actually gave many tickets away, yet plays on our return were so little followed at Wakefield, and had become so unfashionable, that even on that occasion there was but 15l. I was reduced to desire a benefit, to get off if possible with safety with bag and baggage, and inserted the following paragraph :

"As Mr. Wilkinson's opening the Theatre, (out of its usual season) was done with a full intention to please the public, though attended not only with infinite trouble, but also extraordinary expence, and as the receipts of the three first houses have not been adequate even to the incidental nightly charges, Mr. Wilkinson imagines his taking a benefit will not be deemed improper, but meet with the approbation and support of the audience."

The Play was desired by Robert Arnot, Esq. a gentleman well known in that neighbourhood, and in the House of Commons. The play was "The Roman Father," with variety of entertainments, and the Burletta of "Midas," but the receipt was only 30l.—So that, after all my trouble, I left Wakefield, and I may truly say, I had not any reason to be apprehensive of robbers when I and my officers, with guards and attendants, marched for Hull winter quarters.

At Hull I once more engaged that Thalestris of the stage, Mrs. Montague, whom I have before noticed, and from the nature of the necessary progression to be observed in this Journal, shall have occasion to mention her again, as I mean to carry it on, if my health will permit, till the year 1794, after which I will sink down with my fruitless pen, and never plague my friends, foes, or the public with either my wrongs, my cares, my successes, or my failures; my marchings or counter-marchings. But to return, as is necessary, to Mrs. Montague, I must observe, that after she was advertised for her performance for Oct. 20, 1778, she recollected the disgrace with which she had left Hull, as I before related, and, Amazonian as she was, her great heart failed; she was not bold, her bounce of courage forsook her, and she retreated from the field of battle and wrote the following letter; but my paragraph is printed first.

“ Mr. Wilkinfon, after having announced Mrs. Montague for Tuesday next, and being disappointed of her coming according to agreement, thinks it incumbent on him, as a duty to the public, to account for what has happened. Mr. Wilkinfon never heard that her appearance would be disagreeable at Hull Theatre, therefore imagines her reasons to be ill-founded, but refers to her own letter, (of which the following is an exact copy) as the most concise and plain method of acquitting himself, and ascertaining the real state of the affair.”

SIR,

Liverpool, Oct. 17, 1778.

“ I have an earnest desire to give up my engagement with you on account of the opposition which I hear is now in agitation against me at Hull; the injury I may sustain from thence, makes me wish to decline all thoughts of Hull. Call me not capricious, for I assure you I had promised myself infinite pleasure from playing there, but dare not risk my theatrical reputation.—For should I go to Hull, and not be suffered to perform, it must be a considerable loss at present, and perhaps in future.—Am, &c.

“ CONSTANTIA MONTAGUE.”

“ N. B. You’ll hear what the town’s real sentiments are. If they will promise to support me I will come.—Write soon.”

I accordingly wrote to her, informing her that all would be well; and on her arrival the follow-

ing note appeared at the bottom of the bills on the night of her appearance.

“N. B. Mrs. Montague having acknowledged
“by letter to Mr. Wilkinfon, that her former be-
“haviour was unjustifiable, and on that account
“would for seven nights, quit an eligible situa-
“tion, on purpose to pay her respects to the ladies
“and gentlemen of Hull, and if approved of at
“this juncture, hopes to receive a welcome as an
“actress on some future occasion. Mr. Wilkin-
“fon has only to add, that his intentions at this
“period are to give variety and satisfaction; he
“therefore hopes that if Mrs. Montague’s endea-
“vours should now please the audience, it will
“obliterate past foibles, and restore her to their
“patronage and favour.”

The said paragraph appeased the people, and it was unanimously agreed to pardon the Fair Fugitive (or culprit):—But when she did appear it was not without marks of displeasure; on which she advanced forwards, apologised for her past ill conduct, acknowledged her errors, and if they would *forgive her that once*, said, indeed, she would be very good, and never do so any more: The pardon of course followed with plaudits, and she was restored to favour, had a good benefit and all was peace.

That worthy veteran Mr. Robertson (still living and well) who had reigned so many years, the Weston and the Shuter of Yorkshire, finding the

weight of years made him not able to endure the harassing life of constant acting—(which certainly, after 40 years practice, the relish of playing must be truly a labor on the mind, spirits, and body)—took his farewell of his Hull friends as a stage actor on Tuesday, Nov. 3, 1778, in the characters of Scrub, and Sharp in “The Lying Valet.” His last performance on any stage, was at York, on Saturday Jan. 16, 1779, in Scrub: The following paragraph was inserted at the bottom of his bill.

“Convinced by age and its usual attendants, that it is high time to quit the little of the Theatre, Mr. Robertson humbly hopes, that upon this occasion (his last benefit, and with which Mr. Wilkinson has kindly befriended him) he shall be honoured with the same indulgence he has so often experienced from the gentlemen and ladies of York, to whom he shall ever be proud of owning himself under the highest obligations.

Here, my weary, good-natured fellow traveller or reader, if you are tired, as I have too much reason to fear you are, we will repose under the first friendly shade or shrubbery, or at the half-way house, and take refreshment, to enable your strength and spirits, with good humour, to forget the fatigue, and with courage to accomplish our journey’s end.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

